Photo *H. W. Nicholls.*

I introduce my puppies three,
  Supported in my pinny;
They're only six weeks old, you see,
  And one is rather skinny.
The infant dogs with me shall play,
  My joys and sorrows sharing,
Till they become, one far-off day,
  Three hounds of lordly bearing.

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"OPEN YOUR MOUTH AND SHUT YOUR EYES."

From the Painting by A. J. Elsley.

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From The Stalls

Photo Foulsham & Banfield.

MARIE DAINTON.

A Dainty Mimic.

Mimicry is the rope that lifted Miss Marie Dainton to fame. Her talent showed itself in the nursery, and, far from being appreciated, earned her many a good smacking. Nurses are touchy sometimes, and grandpa does not want to know how he looks when he walks. She never makes up for any character she impersonates, relying entirely on modulation of voice, facial change, and gesture. Sometimes she spends hours before the looking-glass so as to get just the right expression of the person to be imitated.

She was once called upon at a moment's notice from the gallery to imitate Little Tich, but declined. She truly says "anyone acquainted with the methods of that versatile comedian will realise how difficult it would be for a lady to do justice to such a turn as his!" Indeed, yes. Some little time back Miss Dainton had a stroke of luck; she did very well in a little deal on the Stock Exchange.

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Photo *Bassano.*

MARIE GEORGE.

An American Who Likes England.

They are notoriously uncareful in the running of trains in America, as is shown by the frightful accidents that so frequently occur. And, according to Miss Marie George, theatrical specials are the worst managed of all.

She had a nasty experience out West, but, as luck would have it, escaped with bruises and a bad shaking. She was calmly crochetting when, without warning, the carriage left the metals, and Miss George was sent flying into the air, over the backs of three seats.

"I like England best," she says. "I don't want to die just yet."

She is American born, and bred from a German stock; her real name being Georg, without the final e. She is one of our brightest comediennes, and for the last seven years has taken a leading part at Drury Lane.

"The greatest event in my life," she says, "was when I played in 'Mother Goose.' Dan Leno took me to his big sympathetic heart; metaphorically speaking of course. I felt a little lost and strange, and he was very, very kind."

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

ETHEL LEWIS,

A Lincolnshire Lassie.

Miss Ethel Lewis is a Lincolnshire girl, with light wavy hair, and eyes of turquoise blue. She has an exceptional voice, and, considering the short time she has been on the stage, she has done marvellously to make such progress at the Savoy.

Some people think her like Phyllis Dare. A French *coiffeur*, who came to do her hair, thought for certain he had got hold of that more famous young lady. Miss Lewis could not understand what the man was driving at. She was only at the bottom of the ladder; why all this absolutely fawning obsequiousness on the part of the *coiffeur?*

It appeared that the poor little man had invented a bottle of hair-lotion, and was trying to explain to Miss Phyllis Dare, as he thought, the mutual advantages to be derived by her letting him boom it by the use of her name.

"I was awfully sorry to disappoint him," says Miss Lewis.

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

MAUDI DARRELL.

A Pretty Exponent of Musical Comedy.

She is one of the brightest and prettiest of musical comedy actresses, but has not always confined herself to musical comedy, for she succeeded Miss Billie Burke in the leading part of "Mrs. Ponderbury's Past."

Another striking event was Miss Darrell's lawsuit with another lady well known on the stage—Miss Ethel Clinton—over the sale of a carriage.

The details are rather complicated; first one lady bought the carriage from the other, then it was sold back again, and lastly, Miss Clinton said it was up to Miss Darrell to buy it back once more.

The jury finally decided Miss Darrell must have the carriage whether she wanted it or not.

It is difficult to conceive that anything so variegated in the way of a deal could have happened between men. It is a lady's privilege to change her mind, but when both parties happen to be ladies, what on earth are judges and juries to do in the matter?

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Photo *Bassano.*

GLADYS COOPER.

"Woo'd and Married and A'."

Only the other day as it seems we were writing our first notice of Miss Gladys Cooper, then little more than a stage debutante, and now—no, she is not leading lady anywhere—she is married.

The lucky man (no formal phrase in this case) is Mr. H. J. Buckmaster, and the event took place at St. George's, Hanover Square. There was a coach and four honeymoon trip to Richmond afterwards.

Miss Cooper is, without exaggeration, one of the most beautiful of Mr. George Edwardes' discoveries, and that, of course, is saying a very great deal. Hers is of the type of true Saxon loveliness.

She is fond of outdoor life, especially of the river—she can handle a pair of sculls with the best. "Give me a two-foot punt, or a golf club, and I am happy," she says.

She was once knocked down by a motor-bus in the Strand, but escaped injury. We should not care to be the driver who ran down Miss Gladys Cooper; the stony heart of even a chauffeur must have felt a pang.

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

GEORGE GRAVES.

A Genial and Popular Comedian.

It was never any good writing a part for Arthur Roberts, neither is it any good writing one—at least a complete one—for Mr. George Graves.

He makes up his dialogue as he goes along. His parts, as written by the author, are like income-tax forms. They are pages of blanks, which he fills in just as he likes!

As the elderly hero, the Marquis in the "Belle of Brittany," he rattled on in his own original way. Every night brought forth new surprises in the way of jokes, clever wheezes, odd wrinkles, and new bits of business. And, drawing his bow at a venture, he generally hits the target fair and square.

Mr. Graves is comparatively new to fame. His rise came about five years ago, as the florist Coquenard in "Veronique." He was extraordinarily good as the General des Ifs in the "Little Michus," following this with Baron Popoff in "The Merry Widow."

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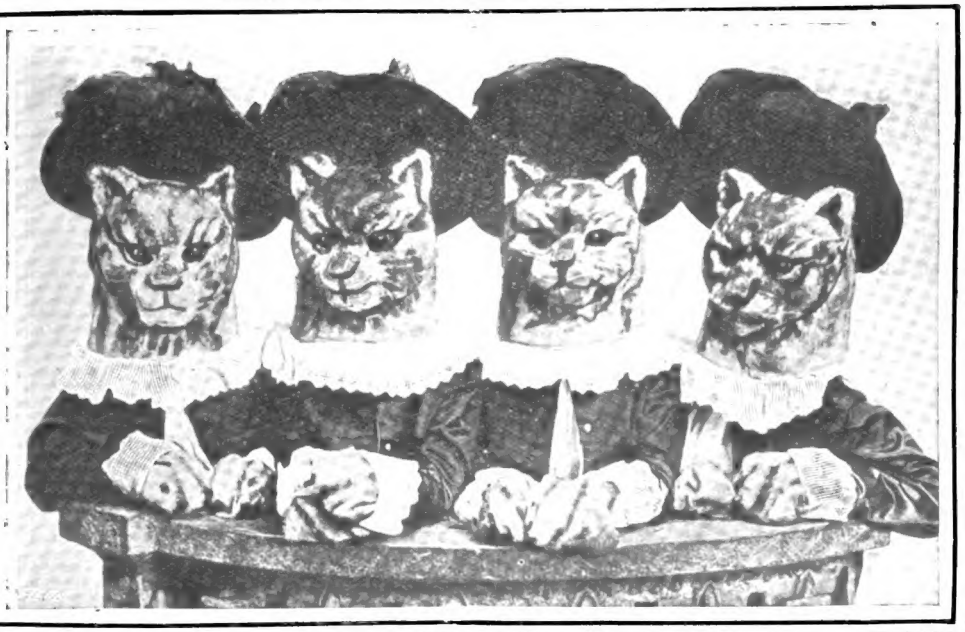

Photo *Hall, New York.*

POLLY PICKLE'S PETS.

A Troupe of Clever Anima! Impersonators.

How children love anything to do with animals! An animal turn is a safe turn when the audience is juvenile.

Mr. Joseph Hart's troupe of animal impersonators caused great amusement at the Coliseum, particularly the cats and the Teddy Bear. The artists who acted as cats could have been no mean acrobats, for they managed to perch themselves up in extraordinary places. Their imitations of pussy's antics on the tiles were certainly faithful. Every inflection of feline vocalisation was exhaustively reproduced. As for the bear, he was a great success, partly owing, perhaps, to the natural tendency of bears to stand on their hind legs, which makes it all the easier for a human being to imitate them.

A grotesquely large parrot strutted about the stage, and said, as well as did, many funny things.

Why are not more talking birds introduced in Pantomime? Here is a glorious opportunity for drollery, which certainly ought not to run to waste.

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

DOROTHY WARD.

A Favourite with the Irish, Belgians, and French.

The manager who discovered Dorothy Ward had an eye to beauty, for she is without doubt one of the most peerless examples of English beauty on the stage to-day. She has a wealth of red-gold hair, rich and gorgeous in hue, magnificent large eyes full of latent fire, and a brilliant complexion. Quite a Burne Jones heroine in colouring, but finer, taller, more masterful than any of his creations.

She is a young actress who is likely to get on very rapidly, for she has artistic intelligence and charm of manner in addition to great beauty.

She has indeed made considerable progress already. She was the rage of Belfast and Dublin in the Pantomime of 1907, and has again renewed her success in Belfast this season. Frenchmen and Belgians had never seen her like till she appeared in the "Revue" with Mr. Seymour Hicks in Paris and Brussels. She also played in the "Waltz Dream" in London.

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TWO GAMES OF CARDS

How a Clever Rogue Won them Both.

By Horace Collins.

The First Game.

Most of the passengers on board the outward-bound South African mail-steamer had succumbed to the turbulent Bay of Biscay, but Cyril Flint, tramping alone the vessel's upper-deck, defied the elements to disturb his good health.

Tall, of muscular build, with very fair hair, laughing blue eyes, and a bright, ruddy complexion, he had the appearance of extreme youth; in reality he was twenty-two. As he marched backwards and forwards, his body swaying with the motion of the boat, his thoughts were full of exultation and expectations from the new life opening out to him—full of the excitement and eagerness usually experienced by the traveller on his first voyage to a strange land—to the Eldorado of his dreams. In his short career he had tried several kinds of professions, and hated them all. He hankered after an out-of-door life—to roam—to see the world, and so he had persuaded his only living relatives, two maiden aunts, to send him to a farm in Natal.

After a few days out, the ocean became calm, and everybody soon gained their sea-legs. The dining-saloon filled up, and Cyril found himself placed next to the Count de Levigny and his daughter, and in a very short time struck up a great friendship with them both.

The Count was a charming old gentleman with a luxurious crop of snow-white hair, an innocent expression of countenance, and the manners of the old French nobility. He had lived many years in the Transvaal, and was full of varied and pleasant anecdote, which he related with a strong foreign accent. He was certainly very amusing, and kept his table in roars of laughter throughout the voyage. He lost no opportunity of impressing on his audience that "if he hadn't been so honest in his dealings he would have been a rich man by now, but honesty in a new country doesn't pay, so he remained poor, with the honour of his ancestors as the only compensation."

It was curious that his daughter should be unmarried, for though she possessed a young-looking face and obtrusively blonde hair, the lines of her figure betrayed her to be well on in middle age. To Cyril, she looked the embodiment of grace and innocence, but this may have been accounted for by the fact that she took a great personal interest in him.

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She had such sympathy and clear impression of his motives and aims—he felt she understood him thoroughly.

At night they would stand at the stern of the ship, and, gazing first at the Southern Cross and then down into the depths of the sea, they would watch the phosphorescent wake of the steamer; and under its mesmeric influence he would tell her all he intended to accomplish.

"He wasn't really going on a farm," he said, "he had only agreed to do that to satisfy his aunts, who were dear old souls, but did not understand the views of a grown-up man—they thought him still a child. He had brought all his capital with him—they wanted him to pay it into the bank—but he knew better. It was much safer to carry it on your own person—besides, people would think he had a banking account, even if he hadn't one."

She sadly reproved him by saying:

"That is rather dishonest, don't you think?"

"Oh, no," he rejoined, "only tactful—it doesn't do to give your business away to everybody;" and then he swelled visibly with pride as she smilingly said:

"How clever of you—I never thought of it in that light. I suppose you have a very large amount of money on you?"

"No; two hundred pounds," he replied; "but people have landed in South Africa with less than that, and I'm told gold is to be found all over the place; it is only a question of looking for it. I have energy, and I shall soon strike lucky, as they say."

His education and up-bringing had made him full of his own conceit and self-importance, and nothing would have convinced him of the danger of confiding in strangers on board ship, however delightful they might be as companions.

One evening they were seated in the drawing-room saloon, and the Count was showing a few of the ladies how to play a harmless game of cards called "Toad-in-the-hole." It is called many other names as well, but the Count considered "Toad-in-the-hole" the most appropriate for his company. It was a very simple game. Five cards are laid face downwards on the table, and a card is dealt to the banker. The players stake anything they like on one or all of the five cards. Each card is then turned up in turn, and if it is of higher value than the banker's card the amount standing against it is paid; if lower, or even value, the banker receives the stake. The odds are much in favour of the bank.

The ladies were staking in pennies, which satisfied their gambling propensities, and gave them keen enjoyment. The Count called his daughter to him, and Cyril followed.

Soon they were both deeply engaged in the game.

Cyril had never gambled before, and his interest rapidly grew. He thought it unmanly to use pennies, especially as the Count's daughter was staking five-shilling pieces and sometimes as much as ten shillings, so he followed her example. The elderly ladies gradually departed to their cabins, but men strolled in from the smoking-room and took their place, and somehow, almost imperceptibly, the stakes increased. They rose from ten shillings to a sovereign, from a sovereign to five pounds, from five pounds to ten, even to twenty pounds.

Cyril was carried away by the prevailing excitement, and played stake after stake without a thought of the amount. It didn't seem like money—the coins to his excited brain became mere counters. If he had been more experienced he would have noticed the change in the Count and his daughter's manner; the greedy look in the eyes of the latter; the guarded, stealthy glance of the former.

Other men played and lost what they intended to lose, and then retired to bed, but Cyril was bitten with the fever and stayed on, the one solitary punter. He had got what is known in gambler's parlance as "the needle." He continued to lose and lose, and now only one five-pound note remained in his quickly reduced bundle. Scarcely realising what he was doing, he flung it down on the table. The Count deliberately and slowly turned up the banker's card—it seemed an age to Cyril's straining, eager eyes. It was an ace. He had lost his final coup.

He sank into his seat and let his head fall heavily on his arms. With the tension of expectancy relaxed he was unable to control himself, and burst into violent, hysterical sobbing. The lights being extinguished in the saloon and on the deck brought him to his senses; he rose unsteadily to his feet and crawled shamefacedly to his cabin. He felt dazed and uncertain what to do—he was absolutely penniless. He dared not apply to his aunts—that would take too long, and besides it would be useless; he knew they had no more spare cash.

There was only one way out of it.

He drew out his trunk from under the bunk and took out the revolver he had surreptitiously purchased. He fingered it tenderly

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—it was the thing he valued most in his whole outfit; he was proud of his manhood in being able to carry such a dangerous toy. He never thought he would have to use it so soon, and against himself.

All at once a gentle tapping at the cabin door made him hide the weapon hastily, and pulling himself together he murmured "Come in."

It was the Count.

"I hope you will excuse my intruding," he said, in a very polite, kind voice, and, Cyril making no reply, he continued: "As a very much older man than yourself I am sure you will allow me to sympathise with you over the extraordinary bad luck you have experienced this evening. I must apologise and express to you my deep regret that I have, as it were, been made the unwilling instrument of your misfortune. Fate deals us nasty blows at times. For myself, I am used to reversals of fortune, and can afford to smile at the fickle jade, but I can understand the pangs of anyone who experiences her bad temper for the first time."

A gentle tapping at the cabin door made him hide the weapon hastily.

Cyril stammered: "It doesn't matter in the least—it is only a little inconvenient being without money on board ship."

"I understand, my dear fellow, perfectly; that is why I have come to see you," said the Count. "I want you to do me a favour by allowing me to place a loan at your disposal."

"It's very good of you—I—I," and Cyril hesitated and spluttered. The Count, pretending not to notice his confusion, hurriedly pushed a five-pound note into his hand. "There, my dear boy, don't think any more about it. Send me a cheque to the "Mount Nelson" on your arrival. I'm awfully sorry you should be worried. By the by, I shouldn't mention anything about our little game to anyone—the captain is so narrow-minded—dead against gambling, you know. Well, good-bye; we get off at Cape Town to-morrow; you go on to Durban, don't you?" Cyril said good-bye and thanked him profusely, and the Count, repeating his regrets, left him.

Cyril, tired out, rose late the next morning just in time to catch a glimpse of the Count and his daughter hurrying along the quay at Cape Town, and he thought to himself, there go a thoroughly kind-hearted lady and gentleman. His five pounds were absorbed in tips and paying his wine account, and, as many another man has done, he landed at Durban without a shilling in his pocket.

The Second Game.

Ten years had elapsed. Cyril Flint stepped on board the very same ship at Cape Town to return to England, for the first time since his arrival in South Africa. But he was

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a very different person from the penniless, conceited cub who had originally landed on its shores. Then, nobody cared what became of him, or whither he went; now, his slightest movement was chronicled in nearly every newspaper on both sides of the water.

People with axes of their own to grind—people seeking their better advancement—adventurers of all descriptions—hurried to book passages on the same boat as Cyril Flint, for he had become a universally known millionaire.

The attractiveness of his personal appearance had increased, and he still possessed the same self-assurance, but instead of its being born of ignorance, it was due to hardships experienced and success achieved. He had gone through many vicissitudes and been taught his business in a hard school of rough, unprincipled men, but he owed his ultimate success more to luck than judgment. He had indulged in many nefarious deeds, escaped punishment by the skin of his teeth, and, finally, planned a big swindle in the flotation of a bogus diamond mine.

Nobody was more surprised than himself when the actual returns from the mine far and away exceeded the most extravagant estimates contained in the fictitious reports of his unscrupulous associates—but so it was; in an incredibly short space of time he was on the high road to becoming a multi-millionaire, and now could even afford to be respectable.

He was travelling with a valet and two secretaries, who had received their posts as a reward for having recognised and expressed approval of his general acuteness. He remained aloof from the other passengers and examined them at his leisure. He was astonished at seeing his old friend the Count and his daughter, and the incident of his last meeting with them instantly flashed across his mind.

Viewed in the light of his knowledge of the world, he was convinced that the Count had cleverly cheated him out of his two hundred pounds—it was a curious coincidence that they should be on board on his triumphant return to his native land. He thought deeply, and then it suddenly struck him that it was no coincidence at all. His journey had been widely advertised, and the Count had no doubt come on board to try to fleece him. He chuckled at his own powers of sagacity. He was confirmed in his opinion by three facts, namely, first, the Count evidently did not recognise him; that was probably on account of the beard Cyril was wearing.

Second, he had changed his name and raised himself in the French peerage—he was now travelling as a marquis; and, third, the woman had dropped the *rôle* of daughter, and adopted that of wife. Except that they had grown very much older and worn-looking, they had not altered.

Cyril was struck by the humour of the situation, and, having nothing better to do on board, decided to teach the Count a lesson, and avenge himself for the trick he had played on him ten years ago. It was easy to scrape up a friendship, for the Count lost no opportunity of throwing himself in Cyril's way; and when a game of poker was at last suggested, Cyril readily acquiesced.

The Marchioness, his wife, did not take part, and as the stakes they decided to play for were rather high, the other passengers preferred not to join them, so they played a two-handed game. Cyril started by asking in a jocular manner: "With or without?" The Count, not liking to plead ignorance, and thinking he meant with or without counters, replied: "With."

The steward brought the counters, and the game began. They played until the smoking-room closed, and curiously enough the Count did not win on a single hand—luck seemed dead against him. He got up a loser of £500.

He smiled, and trusted *monsieur* would give him his revenge the next evening. Cyril grinned sardonically, and replied: "With pleasure." They played every night afterwards, and every time before they began Cyril asked the strange question: "With or without?" and the Count replied: "With," and at the finish of play Cyril always rose a winner.

The night before the steamer was due in port, they decided to have a settlement, instead of playing again. The Count added up his nightly losings, and found he owed Cyril three thousand pounds.

"You do not know me, and I suppose you will not take my cheque?" anxiously asked the Count.

Cyril replied that he would prefer cash.

"It's a large sum of money," sighed the Count. "Fortunately I always travel with a good deal because I am an inveterate gambler, I'm sorry to say; but it will clear me out entirely; it is absolutely all I have on me." He went down to his cabin and returned with a large roll of banknotes, and with a very wry face handed it over.

"There, *monsieur*, I congratulate you on your luck."

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Cyril counted the notes slowly, and with a knowing wink said: "Yes, it's better luck than I had the last time I played with you."

The Count started back. "What do you mean, *monsieur?* I have never met you before."

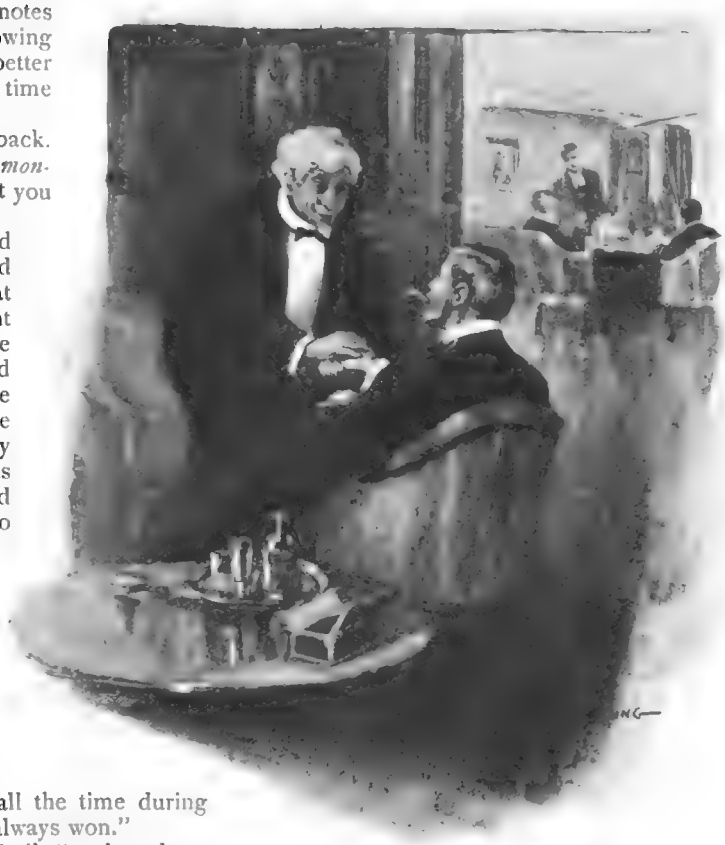
Then Cyril refreshed the Count's memory, and wound up by saying that he hoped he had taught him a useful lesson. The Count wept bitterly and asked to be forgiven. He was a poor man, and he had to earn his living by his wits. *Monsieur* was rich, and three thousand pounds were nothing to him; as for himself and his poor wife, they were ruined. Then, restraining his grief, he said, as Cyril knew so much, he might as well make a further confession. Cyril asked what it was.

The Count replied: "I have been cheating all the time during this voyage, and yet you always won."

"Yes, I know," said Cyril, "and so have I. That was what I meant when I asked you at the beginning of each game: 'With or without?' I meant with or without cheating. I can play equally well either way. You see, I have learnt a great deal since last I saw you."

The Count got up from his chair, roared with laughter, and slapped Cyril vigorously on the back. "Bravo, *mon ami,* you are indeed a wonder. I thought I knew every move on the boards, but I see you can teach me something. I would give twice the money I have lost to learn that trick. You deserved to win. I don't regret it." He squeezed Cyril affectionately by the hand, and Cyril beamed with satisfaction.

In the morning after the ship had cast anchor, and the passengers were leaving, the Count sidled up to Cyril, and taking him aside, nervously said: "I don't like to approach you, *monsieur.* I hardly know how to say it; but I haven't a penny in the world. My wife and myself have been kept awake all night thinking about it. You couldn't manage to let us have five hundred pounds? I will send you my cheque as soon as I get to Paris, and am able to pull myself round."



He squeezed Cyril affectionately by the hand.

He pleaded very hard, and Cyril was rather touched by the old man's genuine distress. In the early morning light he looked broken and ill, and presented a pathetic picture. He returned to the smoking-room and wrote him out a cheque for five hundred pounds. The Count snatched at it eagerly and overwhelmed him with flowery speeches of thanks and gratitude. Two days afterwards, when, from a palatial suite of rooms at Claridge's Hotel, Cyril sent his secretary to pay his money into the bank, he became a wiser if not a better man. The Count had won both games, and in addition retained a master-card, for he was the possessor of a secret, which, if bruited abroad, would damage irrevocably Cyril's reputation as a financial genius.

The cheque for five hundred pounds had been cashed, and Cyril heaved a very deep sigh indeed as he threw in the fire the heavy bundle of counterfeit notes.

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Now, *do* I look mischievous?

Miss Mischief

An Account of an Escapade, with Photographs of the Narrator, as Given by Herself to

OWEN OLIVER.

WHEN I was young I was very naughty; but I am sixteen now, so I have made up my mind to be very serious and proper. When I try to be serious I generally burst out laughing; but I am fearfully proper, and it is a great shame that they won't leave off calling me Miss Mischief! Now, *do* I look mischievous? I knew you'd say "No!" They think I am because I have a sense of humour, and see jokes that they don't.

My sense of humour used to get me into a lot of rows. Once it got me into five rows in five days!

I was very unlucky. On Monday I filled the white sugar box with salt, and cook used it to make things for a dinner-party. Oh—h—h! *Didn't* they splutter! I didn't think mother suspected me till they had gone. Then she spoke in an awful voice.

"Evangeline Constance!" she said. "Everyone took sweets except Uncle Joseph and *you!*"

"Fancy Uncle Joseph playing a trick like that!" I said.

Mother has no sense of humour, you know. She didn't even laugh.

On Tuesday there was a bother about a cork getting into grandma's ear trumpet. On Wednesday I made a funny face at Jane, and she dropped the tray with the best tea service on it. On Thursday I got into trouble for putting golden syrup on Aunt Jane's wig. I knew it would make the flies come, but I forgot about wasps. Some of them settled on her nose. Well, it wasn't my fault. I hadn't put anything on *that!*

How was I to know she didn't eat them?

On Friday there was a really awful row. I kept knocking at the front door with a string tied to the knocker. Father hid behind the door with a stick. It was a real knock when he rushed out. He had to give the paper boy half-a-crown compensation.

On Saturday Sis took me to Cousin Milly's for the week-end, so I kept out of trouble for the rest of the week. Sis is a dear! It was through her that I gave up being so misch—I mean so humorous. I'll tell you about it; but you mustn't say a word to anybody. Promise? . . . On honour, mind! . . .

It was last summer holidays, just before I was sixteen, and I was rather in disgrace over the silly school report. It said that my work was "casual." I told father it must be a mistake for "careful," but he did not think so. He did not like the part about conduct either. Perhaps you wouldn't, so I won't tell you what they said. It wasn't my fault, but the French mistress's. We always rag her, and she doesn't like me because I gave her some frogs. How was I to know she didn't eat them?

The frog row was last term. The summer term row was through her bad English. I got up to whisper to someone, and she called out "Sit in your desk." So I opened the lid and sat in it. The headmistress said I knew what she meant, and called it impudence. Some people don't understand the difference

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between impudence and obedience! Father didn't. He said he'd send me away to a boarding-school, if I didn't behave better.

So I thought I'd be very good all the holidays, and I got Tom Carson to help me. He is the vicar's son, and he was home for the holidays. He isn't stuck up because he is two years older than I am. I always expected that he would fall in love with me, when we were old enough.

I was ever so good for a week. Then I felt as if I must do something, and I told him so when we were fishing in the brook one afternoon. He puts on the worms, and I have the fish.

"Tommy," I said, "I shall die if I don't rag someone; and if I do I shall get into a row."

"Rag me," he suggested.

"Pooh!" I said. "It's no use ragging people who won't get ratty!" He's frightfully good-tempered. It makes me savage with him sometimes.

"Try a quiet rag and don't get found out," he proposed next.

"They always suspect me," I grumbled.

"How funny!" he said, and laughed. I tried to box his ears, and he ducked and I fell down the bank, but he caught me before I rolled into the brook; and then he laughed again; and I tried to snatch his rod, and he sat me down "bump."

I do not think about my looks, of course; but if I did I should think that I was rather good-looking.

"You great rough bear!" I said. "When I grow up I won't have anything to do with you."

"You'll never get anyone else," he told me.

I consider that was very rude. I do not think about my looks, of course; but if I did I should think that I was rather good-looking.

"*You* won't," I declared; "not even if you advertise for a— Oh—h—h! Tommy! Wouldn't it be a lark, if we did!"

"Did what, Kitten?" he asked. He always calls me that.

"Put an advertisement in the paper; for a husband; or a wife? And made an appointment where we could watch them."

"Kitten," he said, "you are the most mischievous imp I ever knew."

"Oh, Tommy!" I begged. "*Do* let's do it."

So he agreed; and we did. I wrote the advertisement first, and then he altered it, and when it was finished it was this:

A LADY, aged 22, considered good-looking, and possessing a small income, wishes to correspond with a gentleman, with a view to matrimony. Photos exchanged in strict confidence.—Address Smilax, c.o. this paper.

I always expected that he would fall in love with me, when we were old enough.

We put it in the *Dullshire Mercury*. Tom paid, because I hadn't any money, but he let the letters come to me, and I waited for the postman at the gate so that no one should see them. Seven gentlemen answered. They gave funny names, and they all wanted photographs before they would go any farther.

I offered to get some of my sister's and send—she is twenty-one and ever so pretty—but Tom wouldn't hear of it, because it wouldn't be fair to drag her in.

"You silly!" I said. "She wouldn't know, and we must send somebody who's good-looking, or they won't go on with it."

"I'll photograph you," he proposed, "and we'll send that." He's good at photography.

"Oh!" I cried. "*Now* I know you think I'm good-looking!" I clapped my hands. He always teased me about my looks, but I didn't believe he meant it, and I wanted to find out. "You donkey!"

"To think you're not ugly?" he asked.

"No. To think I'd look old enough."

"You'll look old enough if you put your hair up," he declared.

So I put up my hair, and wore a blouse of Sis's and her pendant. (She was out!) I looked dreadfully dignified and old, and one of the photos was just like Sis. He printed a lot of that one, and we sent them off.

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"Now you see what you'll get by advertising," I warned Tom.

They all seemed pleased, and sent us their photos. You never saw such a funny lot. Some of them were quite old, and we laughed like anything.

"Now you see what you'll get by advertising!" I warned Tom.

"What *you'll* get," he contradicted. "*I've* got this." He held up the one of me.

"Then you've done very well," I told him.

"Yes," he agreed. He tried to laugh directly afterwards; but *he said it quite seriously*, and he went red.

"*Gâteau!*" I said. (I promised mother not to say "cake" because she considers it vulgar!) "What are you going to do now?"

"We'll make appointments for them all to meet Smilax at the same time," he decided, "and tell them to wear white roses in their buttonholes."

"Where?" I cried.

"In the park, just outside the refreshment-room. I know the man who keeps it. He'll let us go in the store-room upstairs, and we can watch them out of the window."

"Oh!" I laughed. "What a lark! I say, Tommy. I look rather like Sis, don't I? In the photo, I mean. If I got her to go there at the same time? They would think she was Smilax!"

"Yes," he said, "they would. So she mustn't go. You—you unprincipled little imp of mischief!"

"Unprincipled!" I cried "Me!"

I *was* cross! I told him—Oh, well! That doesn't matter. We made it up, and I didn't say any more about getting Sis to go; but I meant to do it all the same. It was quite easy. I said that Essie Martin would like to meet her on the seat by the refreshment-room, and she went.

So did we. The man let us in at the back door and upstairs into the store-room, and we opened the window and sat on chairs behind the blind. It was one of those gauze things that let you look out, but don't let people see in. Sis was on the seat just underneath. Tom didn't know her hat, but I did!

We recognised three men from the photos. There was a stout man with a big red nose (he had signed himself Mark Antony); a thin, pale man with long hair (he called himself Swinburne De Montmorency); and a grinning little fellow with a check suit and red hair. (The name in his letter was One Who Means Business.)

The grinning man walked straight up to Sis; and then Tom guessed whose hat it was and scowled at me.

"You little beast!" he muttered. Wasn't it *rude!* But I couldn't help giggling.

The grinning man bowed with a jerk and he giggled, too.

"Wot price Smilax, miss?" he asked; and I saw Sis's hat bob back as if she stuck her nose up.

"*Sir!*" she cried, in a voice that made the man jump and stare with his mouth open.

"Come, come!" he said. "No larks, miss. I'm One Who Means Business, see. No foolin' about, but an engagement ring to-morrow if we suit, and——"

I don't know how Sis looked, but it must have been awful. The man walked off and didn't say another word until he was twenty yards away. Then he looked round over his shoulder.

"'Aughty 'umbug!" hegrowled.

I nearly fell off my chair from choking my laughter. Tom grumbled at me like

"Unprincipled!" I cried. "Me!"

"You little beast!" he muttered. Wasn't it *rude!* But I couldn't help giggling.

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anything, but I didn't care, because I knew I'd get over him afterwards. I always do.

I laughed so much that I didn't notice the fat man till I heard his voice.

"I believe that I have an appointment with you, madam," he said.

"*No!*" Sis told him. She said it in such a voice that he went off without a word. He looked so funny waddling away like a startled duck. Even Tom couldn't help laughing that time, and I had to stuff my handkerchief in my mouth, for fear Sis would hear me; and then the long-haired man walked up.

"I should know your face among a thousand," he said. "Sweet Smilax——"

Sis stood up and pointed to a policeman. I didn't hear what she said, because a sort of bagpipey noise began to come through my handkerchief, and Tom bundled me out on the landing, and I laughed till I cried.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," he said, and then he burst out laughing, too. It *was* so funny.

At last we went back to the window to see if the coast was clear; but Sis was walking about looking round the sides of the refreshment room. I thought perhaps she was looking for me. It is absurd the way they always suspect me.

"Tommy," I said, "I'm in for it!"

"Well," he said, "I'm in for it, too. I shan't grumble about the row," he said; "but you humbugged me about this, Kitten. You made me think that you wouldn't drag your sister in." He turned away, and I knew that he was awfully cut up.

It is absurd the way they always suspect me.

"I thought you were a better pal," he told me.

I sat down and cried like anything.

"I know I'm horrid," I said; "but I'll never cheat *you* again. Never, never, *never!*"

I sat down and cried like anything.

And I never will.

Tommy was very nice. (That was when we made up our minds to be engaged when we grew up.) Presently we went back to the window; but Sis hadn't gone; and in a few minutes a tall, good-looking fellow in a new frock coat and a shiny tall hat came up. He was a gentleman, and quite different from the others.

I nearly fell off my chair from choking my laughter.

"Pardon me," he said very politely, "if I make a mistake; but I think I have had the honour of some correspondence with you."

"Sir," said Sis. "I take you for a gentleman. So I can only conclude that I am the victim of some deliberate plot to insult and humiliate me. I do not know you. I have had no correspondence with any stranger. I have not the slightest idea why you address me. You are the fourth person who has done so this afternoon."

"I beg your pardon most sincerely," he said. "I thought—I should be most grateful if you will allow me to explain. You may be sure that I will not attempt to force my company upon you. If you prefer, I will give you my name and address, and your people can communicate with me. I am Dr. Moore—Frank Moore. I have just bought a partnership with Dr. Graham at Findleham."

"Oh!" said Sis, "I know Dr. Graham. I —I think I might hear your explanation, Dr. Moore." I *thought* she would, because he was so good-looking. Grown-up girls are very artful!

He sat down beside her and told her about the advertisement. He had answered it just for a joke, he said, and when he received the photograph he felt sure that the advertiser

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was joking, too, because—"Excuse me for saying so, but I felt that the original of the photograph could not find advertisement necessary."

"Photograph!" cried Sis. "They dared to send a photograph of me! You must be mistaken."

He pulled it out of his pocket and handed it to her; and then I *knew* there would be a row.

"That," she said, in an awful voice, "is my sister. She is barely sixteen, but she has done her hair up. She is the most incorrigibly naughty and mischievous child I ever knew. She told me that a friend—a lady friend—wished to meet me here this afternoon. That was why I came. I don't understand why *you* came, as you thought it was only a joke, Dr. Moore."

She made me feel very wicked, and I promised to keep myself out of mischief—and Tom, too!

That was a fib! She knew jolly well!

"It looked such a pleasant joke," he said, "the portrait. It is exactly like you, Miss—"

"Raynor," she told him.

"Perhaps I might ask Dr. Graham to bring me over some time, and make our acquaintance more formal," he suggested. "Unless you would prefer me to come now and explain matters to your father?"

"Boarding-school!" I muttered to Tom. He didn't say anything, but patted me on the shoulder.

Sis didn't answer him for a little while; and then she had got back to her usual nice way of speaking.

"We shall be pleased to see you, Dr. Moore," she said; "but I don't want you to explain to father. He is very annoyed with my sister already; she is so dreadfully mischievous; and he has threatened to send her to a boarding-school. If he knew of this I think he would. She is a dreadful child; but it's only thoughtlessness. She's very nice really."

I pulled the blind away and looked out.

"No, I'm not," I said. "I'm a horrid, mischievous little beast. Tom told me not to drag you in, and——"

Tom put his hand over my mouth, and tried to make out that it was all his fault, and I tried to pull his hand away, and Dr. Moore laughed, and said we had better have it out downstairs in the refreshment rooms; and we had a lot of ices, and laughed about it.

But Sis didn't laugh when she talked to me about it at bedtime. I didn't, either. She was dreadfully nice and kind, and she took hold of my hands and called me "dear little sister;" but she made me feel very wicked, and I promised to keep myself out of mischief—and Tom, too! Because I remembered what he said about sharing my rows. I have really made up my mind to reform, for Tom's sake as much as my own. So now I do not get into mischief, and am very, very good.

So now I do not get into mischief, and am very, very good.

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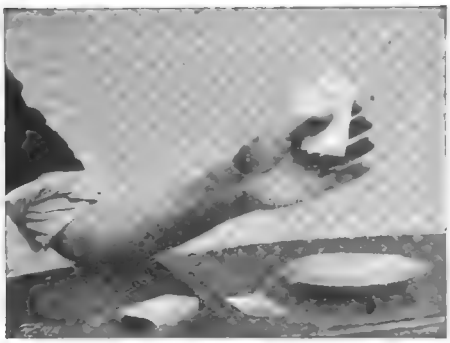


A Trick with Visiting Cards.—(1) The little piece of wax on the long card.

TRICKS at the DINNER TABLE.

By David Devant.

One or two little after-dinner tricks are always welcome, and in this article Mr. David Devant, the world's greatest conjuror, gives away the secret of a number which, though well within the scope of the ordinary individual, are very mystifying to those not sharing the performer's knowledge. A further selection of "Tricks at the Dinner Table" will appear next month.

A TRICK WITH VISITING CARDS.

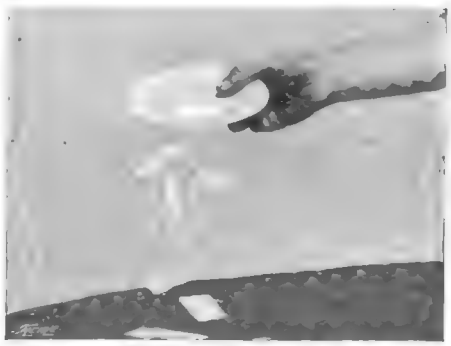
Take out your card case, empty out the cards, and show that they are all alike. Then ask someone to initial one of the cards, and put it back among the others. Take up a dessert plate, turn it over, and put all the cards on it. Then throw the cards into the air, and at the same time turn the plate over and make a lunge forward with it into the shower of the falling cards. One card is caught on the plate, and that card will be the one initialled.

To do this you must make a little preparation beforehand. The man who prints your cards must be instructed to make some a shade shorter than the others. Put the short ones into your card case and have one card of the usual length at the top. When you empty out the cards you must secretly notice where the long card gets moved to, and it is that card which is initialled. When you mix up the cards again you shuffle them apparently carelessly, but really you arrange matters so that the long card which has been marked is on the top. While the person was marking the card you took from your left hand waistcoat pocket a tiny piece of wax. In picking up a dessert plate and handing it to someone to show that there was no trickery about it, you got the wax on to the top of the long card.

The next thing to do is to get the card attached to the front of the plate, and this is the simplest way of doing it. Take back the plate and show once more that there is no secret about it. Then, as if you needed to show that you have no kind of apparatus hidden in your right hand, turn the plate face downwards and put it in the left hand, and thus over the card on which there is a piece of wax. The card thus sticks to the plate. Then take the plate in the right hand again, and place all the cards on it. The trick is now practically done, but do not forget to scrape off the wax with the finger nail when you hand out the card for inspection. The wax may adhere to the card or to the plate; a piece of soft wax about the size of a pin's head is quite enough.

The conjuror can dispense with the wax by holding the chosen card close to the plate with his middle finger.

(2) Putting the plate over the card with the wax on it. The card is surreptitiously affixed to the plate by means of this wax.



(3) When the cards are thrown up in the air the waxed one remains on the plate, and appears to have been caught.

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A COUNTING RACE.

Here is a little trick which the conjuror can show without using his hands at all. He merely asks someone to race him at counting to a hundred, but the rule of the race is that one of them selects any number up to ten, the other adds on any number, not exceeding ten, and so they go on until the one who reaches a hundred first wins.

Your victim is sure to ask who is to begin first, and you may safely give the lead to anyone who does not know the trick because you will always win.

I may as well give the trick away at once by saying that the conjuror must take care to come to these numbers himself—12, 23, 34, 45, 56, 67, 78, 89. It will then be obvious that although the opponent has the next call, he cannot win, because he may not call beyond ten at a time. If the conjuror sees that the opponent does not grasp the secret of the trick, he need not trouble about getting to one of the necessary numbers until the middle of the race.

Do not do the trick too many times with one opponent, and if you are asked to begin, and you think that the company are beginning to think of the trick, begin with "one," and you may be quite sure of winning. If the audience do not see how you are always winning, you can safely offer to begin at any number they like, up to ten.

Anyone who does not know the trick will think that victory must rest with the man who begins by calling 10, and if your opponent begins in that way you can magnanimously offer to give him a chance by adding on only 2 for yourself, and making the total 12. But do not copy the example of an amateur I know who began in this way, and when he reached 12, offered to bet anyone a new hat that he would win. By this display of confidence in himself he let out that 12 was a necessary number, and other people soon found out the other numbers.

THE THIRTY-ONE TRICK.

A similar trick to the above is done with cards, but it may just as well be done with pieces of paper, on which are written the numbers from 1 to 6. You want four lots of these—24 in all. This is a race to the number 31. The cards or pieces of paper should be spread out on the table. You invite your opponent to draw a card and you add one to it. The one who gets to 31 first wins. Arrange matters so that you always come to the numbers 3, 10, 17, and 24 and you will win.

The conjuror who performs round the dinner table should make a habit of watching his audience's eyes. By so doing he will be able sometimes to correct a mistake before it is actually discovered, because he will see just what the audience are looking at. The dinner table conjuror must also be ready for any emergency, although, of course, this may be said of any conjuror.

In the course of the sketch "The Magical Master," which I produced at St. George's Hall last year, my assistant had to bring me a letter which was supposed to contain a message from the Mahatma. One afternoon he came on without it and whispered to me that he had forgotten it.

I had a fraction of a second in which to decide what to do. During that time I remembered I had a letter in my own pocket. I "palmed" that letter and pretended to take it out of my assistant's pocket. The audience were none the wiser. My other assistant had to look over my shoulder and read off the message from the Mahatma. If he had really read what was before him that afternoon he would have read out a request from a friend of mine for the loan of £5! I had marked the letter "Yes," and had intended to give it to my secretary to answer just before I went on the stage. Luckily for me, I had forgotten it. I may say that this is the only time I have ever been really delighted at receiving such a request.

THE WINE TRICK.

The amateur conjuror who tries to perform while he is sitting at a dinner table has no easy task before him. If a trick fails, the conjuror will get the wrong kind of laughter, but even a little success may be the means of giving the conjuror an uncomfortable time.

I recall a case in which a success was quite unwelcome to the conjuror. We were all sitting round the dinner table; the men were dying for smokes, and the ladies showed no disposition to give them the opportunity for smoking. A young amateur conjuror performed some little trick for the enjoyment of the ladies next to him. I forget what the trick was, but it was evidently appreciated, for the ladies and the men near him asked him to do it again.

He assured them that he was quite unable to do it again, but they pressed him to repeat it, and folk lower down the table who had not seen it said he really must do it for them, and finally the hostess, somewhat sternly, asked him to do the trick again for her benefit.

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THE WINE TRICK.—(1) The glasses at the beginning of the trick.

The poor young man was in a dilemma. He knew that if he did the trick again those members of his audience who had seen it before would be on the alert, and would probably catch him out. At last he did what was perhaps the best thing to do in the circumstances, he told the truth, and said openly they would see through it if he did it again. Then he appealed to me to confirm him that no conjuror ever does the same trick twice. I was on the point of saying, "except when he knows of more than one way of doing it," but I did not say it. I came to the amateur's rescue by doing this :

I put some wine into my glass until it was about half full, and then stood an empty wine-glass on the top of it. I then handed the two glasses, one on the top of the other, to the lady sitting next to me, and asked her if she would pour the wine from the bottom glass into the top one and drink it, but she was to use only one hand and not touch the top glass with it. She gave it up, so I did it. If any reader wants to do it, let him lean back and take the foot of the top glass between his teeth. If he holds it tightly he can pour the wine into it. Then let the glass with the wine in it rest on the top of the empty glass. Then, putting the mouth to the top glass and pressing upwards by holding the bottom glass, the conjuror can drink the wine. The photographs show just how this should be done.

It will be seen that this is nothing more than a puzzle but that does not matter. Puzzles pass as tricks when you are sitting round the dinner table, and the enthusiastic amateur will soon learn a number of them, for some of the tricks I have described in other articles can be performed at the dinner table. I advise all amateurs to keep a list of the tricks they know. Otherwise, they will probably find, when they are suddenly asked to "show us a trick," that they cannot remember some of their best tricks.

Here is another puzzle, similar to the one with wine, but done in a different way :

(2) The foot of the top glass is held in the mouth.

(3) Pouring the wine into the top glass.

(4) Lowering the top glass on to the bottom one.

(5) Drinking the wine. The top glass has not been touched by the hand during the whole of the trick.

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A Water Problem.—(1) Turn the glass and plate upside down, and stoop till the head rests on the bottom of the glass.

A WATER PROBLEM.

Pour water into a tumbler until it is about half full. Place a small plate on the top of the glass, and, holding the glass with the right hand and pressing the plate with the left, turn the lot upside down. Take care that the water does not spill. The trick is to drink the water, but only one hand may be used.

When everybody has given it up, bend down until the top of the head touches the glass and stand erect, supporting the plate and glass with the hand. This done, the plate can be removed and the water drunk.

All tricks done round the table should be of the impromptu kind, done apparently on the spur of the moment. The amateur who goes out of the room to make elaborate preparations prejudices people against him before he starts. I did not know this when I first began to do tricks.

One evening—I was an amateur at the time—I was asked to do a few tricks while the young people were sitting round the dinner table. I begged to be excused a moment while I made a few preparations outside the room, and while I was outside another amateur showed a lot of puzzles and tricks which required no preparation at all. I was out of the room for some little time, and when I returned my tricks and I had been forgotten altogether, and I had gone to such a lot of trouble to get something very intricate to show them.

By the way, never show anything over which people have to puzzle themselves too much—unless they want to—just after dinner. Don't do any tricks in which people have to remember the names of a lot of cards, or numbers, or anything of the kind. Tricks done round the dinner table must speak for themselves.

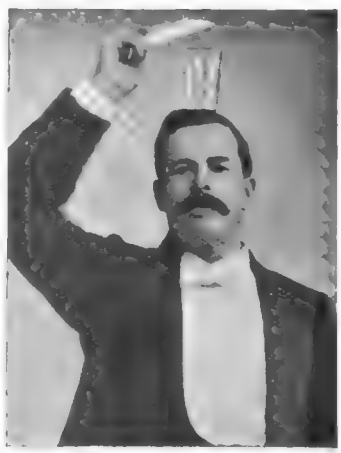
Here is a trick which requires some little preparation before the performance, but as the preparation is all done before the table is laid, the conjuror is able to begin whenever he likes. It is called

THE DANCING PLATES.

The apparatus, which can be bought for a few pence from any dealer in conjuring tricks and apparatus, consists of a small rubber bulb and a larger one connected by a long piece of rubber tubing. Take the servants into your confidence, and arrange several of these little things under the cloth in such a way that the little bulbs come just under the plates of some of the young people who are going to be at the dinner—the large bulbs must, of course, be brought to the place where the conjuror is going to sit.

(2) Pressing firmly on the plate to keep it and the glass in position, stand erect and balance the plate and glass on top of the head.

To make the plates dance the conjuror merely squeezes the big bulbs which are under the cloth in his lap. With a little manipulation the plates can be made to make all sorts of queer movements. The conjuror should not appear to have anything to do with the trick. Let him talk to the lady next to him while he is working the apparatus; of course his attention will be called to the dancing plates, and he can then attribute their movements to his magical influence.



(3) Then remove the plate, and drink the water as you promised to do.

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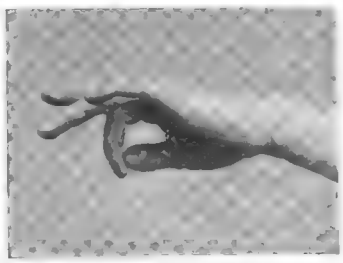
A STRONG MUSCLE.

If you happen to be sitting on the right of your hostess and she is at all interested in tricks you can show her this one for her special benefit. Hold your left hand with the palm downwards, and put a sixpence at the bottom of the third finger. Then move the finger upwards quickly and make the coin turn right over. You explain that this is done by the strength of the muscle in the third finger. Soon after you have done it everybody at the table will be trying it—and failing.

A STRONG MUSCLE.—(1) Showing where the sixpence should be placed.

The truth is you have told another "conjuror's lie"; the coin did not turn over because you have a strong muscle in the third finger. To do the trick, bend the thumb inwards and press it against the inside of the tip of the third finger. This acts as a sort of little spring. Press the thumb away from the finger suddenly and the finger will be jerked upwards and the coin will turn over.



(2) How you get the necessary spring in the finger (exposed view).

Perhaps you now see why I suggested that the trick was to be done for the benefit of the hostess. You could not do the trick with your hand above the level of the table; the audience would see how it was done. If you are pestered to do it again, get a little way away from the table and hold the hand down as low as possible. You can explain the necessity for this curious position by saying that it cramps the muscle if you hold your hand up. Perhaps, after this, you will be thinking that I have taught you enough fibs in one chapter. My only excuse is that nobody expects to get the truth from a conjuror; at least, if there is such a person I am afraid he or she must be disappointed frequently.

Amateurs have often asked me what they ought to do when people see through their tricks, and my only answer is: It depends on circumstances. If the amateur is giving quite a regular performance on a platform and he overhears someone whispering the secret of the trick he is showing to another member of the audience, then the conjuror should take no notice of the whisperer. If the amateur conjuror makes a mistake—and the best conjurors in the world make mistakes sometimes—he should keep a smiling face and go on as though nothing unusual had happened. In all probability the mistake was not seen by many people in the audience. On no account must the conjuror get flustered; neither should he attempt to make any apology for the mistake. As a matter of fact, a mistake during the performance is the best test of a conjuror's ability. The conjuror does not really know a trick thoroughly until everything that can possibly go wrong with it has gone wrong, and unfortunately this knowledge can be acquired only by experience in front of audiences.

The amateur who performs at the dinner table will probably find people anxious to guess at the secrets of his tricks, and if he allows himself to be drawn into an argument about them he will probably give away his secrets. If he cannot "bluff" well, he should remember that silence is golden—sometimes.

(More "Tricks at the Dinner Table" will appear next month.)

QUITE DECOROUS.

I nestled in a cosy chair,
With Maud upon my knee;
My arm was round her slender waist—
***She* didn't mind, not she!**

And when I kissed her, more than once,
She didn't care a scrap;
In fact, she kissed me in return,
And stayed upon my lap.

Our talk and our behaviour were
Not very staid, I fear:
When in walked Isabel, to whom
I've been engaged a year.

She didn't make a horrid fuss,
But calmly closed the door;
Then—she joined me in petting Maud,
Whose age is barely four!

Reginald Rigby.

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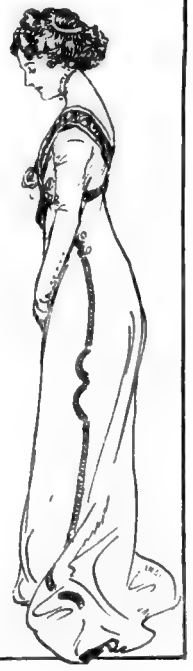
FINE FEATHERS MAKE FINE BIRDS.

If, instead of nineteen hundred, we were still in seventeen
(When a sky-blue satin coat was quite the thing),
What a far gallanter figure I'd have cut upon the scene
In the costume worn when George the Third was King.

Had I wooed you in peach-bloom brocade, instead of saying "No,"
'Tis possible you might have let me wring
A sweeter answer—had you been a Belle, and I a Beau
Of the period when George the Third was King.

I repeat, you might have yielded if, instead of just the serge
Or tweed to which we usually cling,
My suit, in satin small-clothes, at your feet I'd fallen to urge,
In the style preferred when George the Third was King.

A. L. H.



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How a Stepmother Came, Saw, and Conquered.

By E. M. Jameson.

The bomb exploded at the breakfast table one Friday morning at nine o'clock precisely. Early rising had never been regarded as a necessary virtue by the Delaney family, and to-day there were still two or three members unaccounted for. From behind the coffee pot Sabina dealt out the news, with the air of one who knows that her throne is tottering at its base. The letter, with its easy-going, straggling writing lay open on the plate beside her. For once the Delaneys' matutinal meal was a failure.

And, worse than all, their father had waxed jocular over an affair which meant the upheaval of their lives.

"And I have always tried to make father so comfortable," Sabina appealed to a thunder-stricken audience. "Ever since I left school——"

"Last term," interpolated Dick, meaning no snub. "We've all been jolly nice to father as a matter of fact, and it's playing things a bit low down to go off and get married again without asking the advice of any of us."

"Who is she? What is she?" Sabina demanded.

"It's girls who always suffer most from stepmothers. Tom goes to the office; Dick clears out to the studio; Harry's Social Club is a splendid excuse for spending nights out. There's Sabina just grown up; there's *me* on the verge—" Biddy's feelings here overcame her.

"Well, it's no use crying over spilt milk," said Tom philosophically, "and if you will carefully dissect his letter you will arrive at certain conclusions. Allow me, Sabina."

He spread the letter before him, and surveyed it carefully through his pince-nez.

"I should judge from the wavering line of handwriting that father was in a blue funk when he wrote. You know how he hates any unpleasantness, and he must remember that we have always treated him with the greatest consideration. Who but ourselves would have put up with——"

"Any fool would know that blue funk naturally follows such an action," remarked Dick, handing over his cup to Sabina, "you don't gratuitously supply your innocent family with a step-parent and feel no qualms of conscience."

"But how infatuated she must be to marry him with seven of us at home——"

"That's what stumps me——"

"She must have known the horrid worst, or she wouldn't have sent the message."

"Perhaps she will turn us out of house and home," said Biddy. "She'll make our lives such a burden to us that father will have to pension us off. Sabina, do you remember that ducky flat the Brinsleys had?"

"I was just beginning to keep somewhere within the housekeeping allowance." Sabina's pretty eyes were full of woe. "Cook was simply amazed when I told her the other day that yellow soap was *not* what she made it out to be a pound."

"Well, cook must suffer with the rest. Hallo! Unconscious of approaching doom the little victims——"

The twins rushed in, hot, dusty, and full of excuses.

"We're *awfully* late, Sabina, but we didn't hear the gong down in the garden. Hannah *swore* she'd smack it extra hard. She can do beastly mean things sometimes."

"Be gentle with them, Sabina, let them be

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happy while they may. There will come a day——"

"Yes, you may have ham and bacon and eggs and marmalade all at the same time if you like," said Sabina bitterly to the amazed twins. "Your hands are frightfully grubby, but it doesn't matter in the least—till Monday."

Fortunately for the sanity of the twins the door opened at the moment to admit the remainder of the family, a person carelessly attired in tweeds, with a soft-fronted shirt, a limp, turned-down collar, and a tie knotted negligently with the ends flying loose. All eyes went in his direction. How would Harry take it?

He vouchsafed a comprehensive nod to the family, and helped himself to a hunch of brown bread, an apple, and a handful of nuts. They waited until his meal was fairly in progress. Harry was the genius, the eccentric of the family, and while they vaguely admired him for his oddities they never quite knew how he would take things.

The twins, all unknowing why the time limit to their orgies should be Monday, had taken every advantage of Sabina's permission to eat unwisely and too well. Harry, solemnly champing nuts, fixed an intolerant eye upon them.

"They'll make themselves ill," he said. "Stop them, somebody."

But no one held up a warning hand, and the twins attacked the viands with renewed vigour.

All the others looked at Sabina, and she was nervously clearing her throat preparatory to breaking the evil tidings. She smoothed the letter out where Tom had crumpled it.

"We've had very bad news this morning, Harry."

"Eh, what? Bad news? Cook's brother dying again? That's the only calamity I can imagine likely to stir this meat-eating family to its depths."

"Squirrel diet doesn't seem to make for politeness, anyhow," said Tom. "No, cook's brother can't decently have another attack so soon; it's only a month since we all went into prospective mourning for him."

Harry peeled an apple with cool deliberation.

"*Father has married again.*" Sabina's voice shook a little as she gave the information.

Harry put his hand to his pocket.

"Ah, by the way, I *thought* there was something I had to tell you all. The announcement was in the late evening edition. A man at the Settlement asked me if John Stuart Delaney was any relation. Of course it was awkward, but fortunately one can't be responsible for all the vagaries committed by one's family."

He dived into his pocket, while the others waited on his every movement.

"No, I remember. Chapman wanted the paper to wrap up some fried fish he bought at the corner. I let him have it."

"Just like you! This comes of keeping low company." Tom rose from the table, and prepared for departure. "I notice, by the way, Sabina, that the morning paper is not to be seen; Codgers is probably perusing it."

But Sabina paid no heed; what were absent newspapers compared with a father's startling intelligence?

"Harry, what was her name? Did she sound young, and somebody fairly presentable?"

"Her name? Whose name? Oh, the second Mrs. Delaney's. Let me think." He paused thoughtfully. "Was it Sarah? No. Susan? No. Something simple like that, though. None of your Arabellas, or Gwendolens, or Sophonisbas. Ann? No, I give it up, and as to her surname, I haven't a notion. Rowlands was speaking at the time about the Old Age Pension Fund, and my attention was taken away."

"The Old Age Pension Fund would naturally interest you far more than father's second marriage," said Dick; "well, I'm off, too. Cheer up, Sabina; she mayn't be half a bad sort, and anyhow we've just got to grin and bear it. I wish you'd speak about the newspaper; it's always late."

Harry, too, sauntered away, his hands in his pockets. He might usually be depended upon to stand aloof from the family when disaster was in the air.

After seeing the twins off to school Sabina turned to Biddy.

"I suppose I'd better tell the servants, Biddy? They won't be pleased. They've simply done as they liked for ages. It was such a mistake that father would never have a housekeeper."

"If it comes to that we'd be jolly well rid of the lot," said Biddy heartily; "it's as much as one can do to get one's boots cleaned in this house. And of course"—with sisterly candour—"they knew that you couldn't be good for much, coming straight from a boarding-school."

"I was improving though," said Sabina ruefully; "in time they wouldn't have

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humbugged me. You told me yourself that I was adding up the grocery account in my sleep the other night. That shows how much in earnest I was,"

"I know you were," said Biddy remorsefully, "but it would take somebody much tougher than you to be even with this lot."

"Let's ring the bell and give cook her orders for the day," said Sabina, gathering her forces together; "it will be a good opportunity for breaking the news."

It was not cook alone who answered the summons. The door opened to display that personage very red in the face, with the two other women servants, and Codgers, the page boy, peering in the background.

Sabina's heart sank as she faced the deputation, while Biddy basely beat a retreat to the window.

"I rang for cook as usual to take her orders for the day," said Sabina, mustering all the dignity of which she was capable.

But the deputation stood its ground. Then Sabina realised that in cook's hand the missing morning paper was tightly clasped.

"We understand, miss, from this"—cook tapped the newspaper majestically—"that master has married again, unbeknownst to his family. We don't like the look of it, and we would all wish you to take notice from this moment. I speak for us all. I'm sure we wish you well and feel for you in being ousted, miss——"

"I will not have any impertinence, cook, or any comments on what your master thinks fit to do." Sabina's voice rang out in a way that made Biddy feel proud of her. "You are at liberty to give notice if you like, and to leave this day month."

"You misunderstand us, miss." Cook's voice was very, very bland. "I should prefer to leave at once, miss, and so would my fellow-servants. We will gladly forfeit any wages that may be due to us."

Sabina knew nothing of her own rights. She looked helplessly round her. If they chose to go they must, but what were they themselves to do?

At this crucial moment Codgers wriggled his way under cook's massive elbow to the front. He belonged to a boys' brigade, and his small, be-buttoned chest showed a military curve.

"*I'm* not on strike, Miss Sabina, don't you think I'd play a low down game like theirs"—he pointed a minute but contemptuous thumb over his shoulder at his fellow-workers—"women are like that sometimes. Don't you fear, miss; I'll stand by you for all I'm worth."

"I'm sure you will, Codgers." Sabina felt that her courage could stand no further reverses. She told the deputation to go, and it went.

Codgers, being a man of his word, promptly began to remove the belated breakfast things.

"You're a brick, Codgers, and we won't forget it," said Biddy. "Do they mean to go soon?"

"Instanter, miss, and a good riddance—been packing of their boxes this hour and more, they 'ave. They're taking away a deal that they never brought in, unless I am much mistaken."

"What do you mean, Codgers?"

But Codgers said no more.

It was the strangest sensation imaginable to roam the kitchen premises freely, and without apology. There was a glorious fire in the range. Their own fire had died out from sheer inanition. The kitchen with its great, polished brasses, rows of silver dish-covers, and glossy, red-tiled floor was the most comfortable room in the house. Whatever cook's pilferings might be, her cleanliness was beyond compare.

Biddy giggled as she borrowed an apron from Codgers and set to work, and even Sabina felt that life held compensations. The servants had undoubtedly been oppressive.

She rolled up her sleeves and prepared for action.

"Do you think, Codgers, that you could wash up while we make the beds? You won't break anything?"

Codgers smiled indulgently from ear to ear.

"Lor' bless you, miss, I've done the washing up this long while; I've peeled the pertaters and dished 'em, too, every night. *And* the knives I've cleaned, well, there——!"

The day passed by in pleasurable excitement. Sabina felt that at last she was mistress of all she surveyed. She and Biddy, the only members of the family at home during the day, had a light lunch at the kitchen table, and found a moment in which to talk over the news of the morning.

"I simply dread meeting her for the first time"—Sabina's toes were cosily on the broad steel fender—"what will she be like, Biddy? Tall and rather imposing? Father generally likes the stately kind. What does one say to a stepmother? Father's not a bit of good at a crisis. He's quite likely

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to bolt off to his room and leave us to face her alone."

"We shall have to lie for all we're worth, and tell her we're glad to see her when we're not. Father may be casual, but he's such a dear, we can't hurt his feelings, can we?"

"No," said Sabina, "we can't, though he deserves it. When the first meeting's over we shall know better what she is like. Let's have tea here, too, Biddy, and I'll make some toast—buttered toast and *very* buttery. Cook was always so stingy about hot toast, wasn't she? Luckily there's plenty of cold beef in the house for dinner and an apple tart or two. The boys must do without vegetables.

It was four o'clock. The kitchen fire was ideal for toasting. Sabina settled herself to accomplish the first slice. Suddenly there came a loud ringing at the front door. The girls looked at one another, and Codgers, in the back kitchen, took off his apron and displayed a dazzling array of buttons.

"*Visitors*," said Biddy in an annoyed whisper.

"Say we're not at home, Codgers."

Codgers departed, to return after a moment's agitated parleying, with a stranger hard upon his heels. He vanished dumbly into the back kitchen, and the visitor came forward with hands outstretched. Sabina and Biddy looked blankly back at her, but admiringly, too, for the newcomer was not only pretty and appealing, but beautifully dressed, and apparently labouring under some embarrassment. She possessed herself of Sabina's limp left hand; the right still wielded the toasting-fork.

"You don't know me, of course," she said, a little catch in her voice which might have been either a sob or a laugh, "I am Nan."

"Then I'm afraid you must have mistaken the house," said Sabina politely, "we do not know anyone called Nan. Our name is Delaney."

"And so is mine!" exclaimed the visitor, half laughing and half distressed. "Oh, Sabina, Biddy, *can't* you see? Don't you understand? I know *you* so well."

Sabina dropped the toasting-fork with a crash; the bread rolled away under the table. It was impossible to be conventional.

"But you weren't coming until Monday—and where's father? *Nothing's* ready."

The second Mrs. Delaney coloured gloriously, and sat down on the edge of the kitchen table, still holding Sabina's hand.

"He is coming back on Monday *by himself*," she announced, smiling at Biddy. "He—he—can't tear himself away from the moors, and it was my idea, *quite* my own, to come and make your acquaintance first. By Monday you may have grown used to me a little."

"How *exactly* like father," said Biddy. "It isn't the moors, it's because he always waits until the first unpleasantness has blown over."

"But there's not going to be any unpleasantness this time," said the second Mrs. Delaney, possessing herself of a hand of each, "you are going to like me after a while. I know you can't at first; you probably hate and detest the idea of me, but let's be friends if you possibly can. I know you all by heart."

"You seem much nicer than we expected, certainly," said Biddy, with the easy-going faculty for which the Delaneys were famed. "Would you mind having tea with us here, or do you like it better in the drawing-room?"

"I'd simply love it here. Sabina, let me make the toast; I'll promise not to burn it. I'm Irish, too, and I always like it very buttery, buttered on both sides, in fact."

She threw off her hat and coat. Sabina, without ceremony, handed over the toasting-fork, and proceeded to cut several more slices of bread.

"The servants have all gone in a body today," she explained; "they saw the announcement in the paper—oh"—incoherently—"I'm so sorry I told you, we're *really* glad to get rid of them. We'll easily get some more to-morrow. I never expected you to come before we had replaced them. Look, look, the toast's on fire!"

The second Mrs. Delaney suddenly put her head down on the table and began to cry quite quietly, but in such a thorough way that warm-hearted Sabina cried a little, too, for company. In that moment all her dread of imposing stepmothers fled for ever. She realised that the anxiety had not been only on their side.

Biddy in her practical way let them mingle their tears, while she baited the toasting-fork with yet another slice of bread, and brought it to a successful issue. Over doubly-buttered portions of toast they made friends, their toes in an intimate row on the kitchen fender.

The second Mrs. Delaney looked round her contentedly.

Later in the evening, when John Stuart Delaney, conscience-stricken and full of remorse, arrived unexpectedly upon the scene, he found that the second Mrs. Delaney had carried all hearts before her without the least assistance on his part.

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"Say we're not at home, Codgers."

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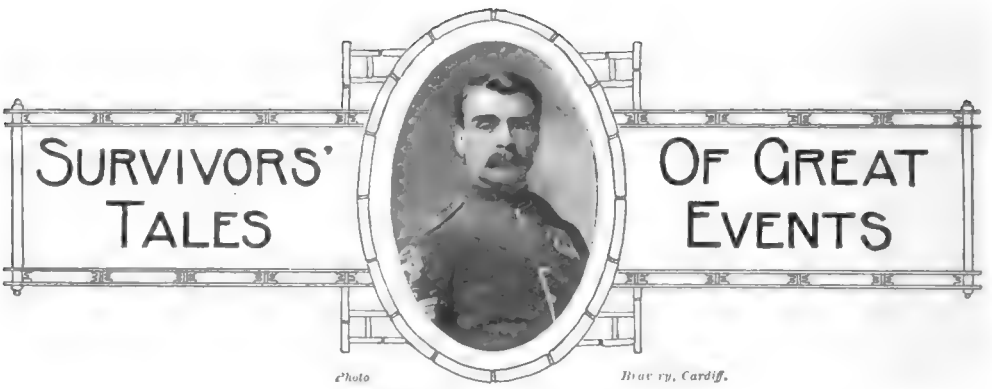

Photo Bravery, Cardiff.

Colour-Sergeant John Murphy.

No. L.—THE DEFENCE OF THE PEKIN LEGATIONS.

FROM THE NARRATIVE OF COLOUR-SERGEANT JOHN MURPHY, LATE ROYAL MARINE LIGHT INFANTRY.

AS TOLD TO WALTER WOOD.

One of the most thrilling and remarkable events in modern history was the defence, in the summer of 1900, of the Legations in Pekin, the capital of China. A rising of the Boxers, who had been guilty of terrible atrocities, compelled all the non-combatants in the city to seek refuge in the British Legation, where, defended by a mere handful of marines, a stubborn and successful resistance was made against the Chinese investment. For two months the defence was valiantly maintained; then the survivors, who had suffered heavy losses, were relieved. Colour-Sergeant Murphy was the senior non-commissioned officer with the Legation Guard, and for his services during the siege he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

You expect strange things to happen in the Far East, and you are seldom disappointed. I had taken part in many curious events, including the occupation of Wei Hai Wei, when Great Britain acquired that naval station from the Japanese. But the most surprising thing I ever saw was on June 1st, 1900, when I was with the Winter Guards at Tientsin.

In the dead of night detachments of all nationalities were landed from the ships which were assembled at Cheefoo. We knew that serious trouble was brewing at Pekin, and the meaning of the landing was that an effort was to be made to grapple with the Boxers there. About a hundred British marines were marched to the station, under orders for Pekin. Nearly the whole of the foreign guards entrained, too, except either the Russians or Germans. When we got to the station somebody objected to the number of the British force, which was greater than any other, and accordingly only seventy-five of us started for Pekin. The railway station at that city is about five miles away from Pekin itself, and we had the five miles to march. If the Boxers had been smart and wide awake they could have picked us off and destroyed us as we marched off in detachments to the Legations; but they have their own way of doing things, and they allowed us to gain the shelter of the Legation buildings—which proved a very bad bit of business for them.

There are really four cities in Pekin—the Chinese, the Tartar, the Imperial, and the Forbidden. The whole of the Legations are in the Tartar city, and it was in these buildings that all the non-combatants assembled, to hold out against the enemy until relief came.

The British detachment of Red Marines was told off to different quarters, and we set to work to fortify the place as best we could. We wrenched frames from windows, and collected bricks and stones, and the ladies made sandbags out of silk, blankets, spare clothing, and any other sort of material that came handy. Fully a thousand pounds' worth of silk was torn up to make sandbags. Meanwhile refugees were pouring in—missionaries, their wives and children, native Christians, and students. There were diplomatists and their

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staffs, too, looking very much like ordinary people. To see them pouring in was an unforgetable sight, and the whole spectacle reminded me of nothing so much as Piccadilly Circus when there is a block of traffic. The refugees did not bring much except themselves, and they were very thankful to be able to get their bodies safely inside the Legations, irrespective of property and personal belongings.

The Chinese are a wonderful people. They always seem to give notice of their intentions. Their preliminary warning was to start setting fire to the European quarter, and for several nights I saw an appalling conflagration. It was an earnest of the hot work that was in store for us.

Things progressed until the 18th or 19th, when I heard that the Japanese Legation Secretary, who had ventured forth in defiance of all warnings and advice, had been shot.

That was only one of many similar tragedies which occurred during the defence. Not long afterwards the German Ambassador and his secretary, who had left the shelter of their Legation, were shot. The Ambassador was killed and the secretary was severely wounded. Nothing was known or seen of the Ambassador until after the siege; then his body was found in a coffin. A member of the college staff, a nice, quiet old gentleman named Mr. James, who had faith in the Chinese, and believed they would not harm him, started to cross the North Bridge, meaning to intercede with the enemy, I daresay. From the time he set out on his journey he was never seen. It was a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the barbarous enemy.

The Boxers had been very accommodating. They had not destroyed us piecemeal as we marched from the station, and they had allowed us, more or less, to fortify ourselves and strengthen our position. Then they seemed to think that it was time to give us warning that they meant serious business, and accordingly they intimated that as the Foreign Powers had taken the Taku Forts this was an act of war, and they called upon the Ambassadors and their suites to leave Pekin and go to Tientsin, promising them safe conduct.

I suppose the diplomatists considered that the safe conduct was not very reliable, and they resolved to remain in the Legations. An ultimatum, which was to expire at four o'clock in the afternoon, had been delivered by the Boxers, who declared that if their terms were not agreed to they would open fire, and sure enough at the appointed hour they began a fusillade which by evening had grown into a hurricane of musketry. They yelled, too, and discharged all sorts of fireworks, but they did not damage anybody, except, perhaps, themselves. Their object was to terrify us, and if noise could have done it they would have triumphed, for I never listened to such a deafening hubbub in my life.

That was the overture. The real tune began on the following day, and it was music of which we all became utterly weary at an early stage of the conflict. We were close together, and, compared with the enemy, we made an exceedingly small force.

We could not dream of rushing them with the bayonet, and we had no artillery, except a marvellous piece of ordnance which was discovered in a native shop, and which we called Betsy. Afterwards the freak—it was nothing else—was christened the International, because it was manned by Americans, the shells were made by a British armourer, and the Russians supplied the powder. It was a fearsome weapon to discharge, being a muzzle-loader, and was far more dangerous to the firers than it was to the enemy.

Very close to the British Legation was a Chinese joss-house, a flimsy structure of straw and bamboos. The Boxers set fire to it, hoping that when the building blazed, as it did fiercely, we should be driven out of our defences and delivered into their clutches. We were in a desperate extremity, and no one realised the peril more than the ladies who were seeking refuge amongst us. No one did his duty more nobly and courageously than these very ladies who, while we fired on the enemy to prevent them from opening a cannonade, hurried to and fro with water to put the flames out. It was largely owing to their help and example that we maintained our spirits and position, and I do not think that in all the dreadful weeks of suffering and privation which were endured before the relief came there were any brighter and braver souls than the ladies.

The Boxers were foiled in their attempt to burn us out, but they renewed it time after time. They knew that Sunday was our day of rest, and perhaps supposed that even now we should act as we were accustomed to do in time of peace. Every Sabbath, therefore, for four or five weeks in succession, hoping to take us off our guard, they attempted to fire adjacent buildings and drive us out; but we were incessantly watchful, day and night, and they never succeeded in catching us asleep or unprepared. By ceaseless vigilance,

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a strain which became unbearable, but which had to be endured for the sake of life itself, we kept them off and held out in our defence, hoping and craving for the relief which seemed never likely to come in time.

We had plenty of water, and food, of a sort. We lived on horseflesh and corn, which was made into bread at a hotel run by an American woman with a Swiss husband. Corn and coffee were ground, and time after time the plucky American rode in, with a rifle slung over one shoulder and an ammunition bandolier over the other. She had the utmost difficulty in keeping the Chinese servants up to their work; but, despite the fact that before the siege ended the hotel was almost destroyed by the Boxers' guns, she triumphed, and we had the bread delivered, according to contract. That again was a thrilling example of what a brave woman can do at a time of stress and crisis. Such luxuries as milk were reserved for the international hospital, which was in charge of two doctors, one British and one German, and all the sick and wounded were taken there for treatment. You can imagine what a strain was put on the hospital's resources at times when I tell you that occasionally two men would have to be placed in the same bed. Two marines were in bed together, one of the men having been wounded in the arm and the other in the leg by bullets.

The native Christians, that is to say, the Chinamen who had been converted and had come in as refugees, suffered terribly. First and foremost, of course, the fighting men, those on whom the very existence of the Legations and the safety of the women and children depended, had to be fed—and they did not fare lavishly, either. After them came the natives, who had to be content with the leavings. It was hard, but inevitable, and they did not get even their meagre rations without working for them. They were told off to different duties, such as laundry work, scavenging, and cleaning; and an admirable system was introduced of taking care that those who did not work did not eat. In spite of everything that could be done for them, the Chinese Christians were dying daily for want of food.

Day after day passed, and we continued to hold out against the Boxers, encouraged greatly by the reports which were brought in by a Chinaman, assuring us that relief was at hand. Every time he came he was, I believe, paid, and that, doubtless, inspired him in his imaginative accounts of the proximity of European troops, who, as a matter of fact, were nowhere near us. He was a Celestial Ananias.

I was in that part of the Legation which was called the stable quarters, and I was constantly in the closest touch with the enemy. If the Boxers had swooped on us we should have been obliterated; but we were mercifully spared from a serious assault. They pounded at us with their guns, and kept up a fusillade of musketry, always yelling, and making as much noise as they could to terrify and dishearten us. They had their own way of fighting, and often enough the Chinese students amongst us would listen to queer arguments between the enemy's soldiers and the officers. Some of the students were always with the troops, and they would interpret the conversations they heard. Very funny, too, were some of the talks. One day a Chinese officer was heard encouraging his men to make an attack upon us.

"Go on, go on," he said.

"No, no—you go," they answered.

"Go on," he repeated, "Be brave, and you will take the Legations in three days."

"No, no," they persisted. "You go—then we will go, too."

There was no help for it; he had either to pull himself together and lead the storming, or be for ever known as a pluckless man. He made an effort, and declared that if his soldiers would follow he would lead. To his lasting credit be it said, he charged us at the head of his little band, a mere handful—something like a half dozen. They came very gingerly from their cover. We waited for our chance—and shot them all as they tried to cross the little space that separated them from the Legation.

A rush of only a hundred yards or so was needed to bring the Boxers into the Legation. They were in strong force, and they could have done it; but they never pulled themselves together for the grand effort—a piece of neglect which makes it possible for me to be at home in England to tell the story of the siege. Their musketry fire was incessant and terrible, and I do not think I exaggerate when I say that from first to last they must have expended millions of rounds of ammunition.

We had our little sorties, of course—and sad and disastrous some of them were, too. On one occasion we went to relieve the Japanese, as their duties had been excessive, and they were worn out with their labours. The Japs had become crafty with long experience, and they knew how best to evade the firearms of the enemy. Colonel Shiba,

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Time after time the plucky American rode in.

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whom I often met, was in command of the Japs.

"Now," he said, "the way to escape them is this. They fire at you from the trees and loopholes—and you must dodge them—so."

He fell on all fours as he spoke, and made a very poor target for marksmen like the Celestials. It was undignified, but pretty safe all the same.

British soldiers do not like to drop down in that fashion, even to escape bullets.

My captain, a brave and determined officer, who did not fancy the performance, did not bend or go down when the firing was directed towards us; nor did Dr. Morrison, the famous correspondent, who was with us. They both remained erect—and they paid dearly for their courage. The captain was mortally wounded by a bullet, which tore across his body, and the doctor received a wound in the leg, which laid him up for the rest of the siege.

During the cessation of hostilities we often sat on the wall, being so near to the Chinese that we could hob-nob in quite a friendly way. We had two parsons with us, and one of them said to the Boxers: "Wait till our troops come out to you, and then you'll get beans."

"Ah," said Johnny, from the wall, "when your troops come out, we shan't be here!"

We rushed several small positions, but we could never really improve any little success we gained, for the Boxers were numbered by the thousand, and we dared not run the risk of being overwhelmed. We pounded at them with our poor old Betsy, and they retaliated with their artillery.

One night the Chinese assembled in force in what was called the Mongol Market, opposite the stable quarters. At that point they had a double door, which, as far as I had noticed, was harmless and inoffensive. No shot had ever been fired from it; yet on this famous night the dead blank burst into the most active life. From the seemingly harmless door the muzzle of a gun was thrust, and the weapon blazed at us with such disastrous effect that the stable quarters, as a defensive post, were ruined, and we never occupied them again.

One little sortie stands out vividly in my mind as I talk. There were amongst us two Chinese students, brothers, who were devotedly attached to each other. One of them was slain, and the survivor declared, in his grief, that as he could not live without him he would spare no effort to meet death also. He kept his word, and plunged recklessly into every danger. But he seemed to bear a charmed life, for he did not succeed in getting anything except a wound that did not prove very serious.

The affair of the masked gun troubled us, and it was determined to rush out and take it. The swoop was to be made early in the morning, and we began it; but the effort was a fiasco. We found that the walls were fourteen feet high, and that we had no scaling-ladders or means of getting to the top except by shinning. We did not happen to be acrobats, and the walls were manned by Chinamen who would have flung us down and shot us a great deal more easily than we could have climbed up the steep sides; so the attempt was abandoned, and I cannot say that I, for one, was over sorry to get back into the comparative shelter and safety of the Legation.

So far I have generalised, because I want to give as clear a picture as I can of the ordinary conditions of life during the siege; but I wish now to particularise, and to dwell on an incident which has not yet been published, and which has scarcely been mentioned, even in dispatches. That was the taking of the Chinese barricade on the Tartar City wall.

The Chinese, wonderfully ingenious in many ways, were amazingly cunning and expert in erecting barricades. Sometimes at night I would see an open space; yet, when daylight broke, a wall, eight or ten feet high, was revealed—a defence which brought the besiegers so much nearer to our own defences. At other times, for instance only a few days before we were relieved, they would actually throw up defences before our very eyes, and, being so few and weakened, we were utterly powerless to prevent them from carrying out their work.

Their methods were as daring as they were simple. Seeking the protection of an angle of a wall, the Chinese would throw out a basket and cast stones and bricks into it until it was filled; then they flung bricks and stones, and, as well as they could, filled up the space between the baskets and the wall.

Having done that, one or two of the Celestial masons would crawl out, lying flat down, and, protected by the stuffed baskets, would calmly go on piling up the *débris* until a very fair barricade had been erected.

The most galling part of the performance was that we had to stand and watch it, not daring to fire either Lee-Metford or Martini, for Chinamen were cheap and plentiful, and ammunition was scarce and precious.

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He charged us at the head of his little band, a mere handful.

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In this bold fashion the Chinese had built a covering wall so near to the American section of the Tartar City wall that the two had been actually joined together. It was clear that they meant business, and on the night of July 3rd they had so far progressed that they had actually advanced from their barricade and built a little tower overlooking the American barricade. Several of the American defenders were wounded by the simple and primitive, but none the less exasperating and humiliating, method of knocking the top stones of the barricade on to the heads of the defenders. It was bad enough to be struck in that fashion, and doubly irritating to be knocked down with your own bricks, so to speak. It may have been the Celestial's idea of humour.

The American position became untenable, and accordingly the Secretary of the United States Embassy and the officers of the United States Marine Corps resolved, with the help of the British and the Russians, to drive the Boxers out and seize their barricades. By doing that they would make a good interval between the Boxers and the American Legation.

During the many sorties which had been made throughout the siege, it was understood that no individual nationality should sacrifice its whole force. This arrangement had its advantages, but there were obvious drawbacks, the greatest of which was the confusion of languages. On this occasion the chief defect was absent, for the operating parties were to be the British and Americans in combination.

I was detailed to parade at half-past one in the morning, with a command of twenty-five men, and report myself to the United States marine officer. As soon as I arrived, I had a taste of the kind of thing that was in store for us, because I found that a British marine had been struck on the head and wounded by a stone which the Boxers had dislodged from the top of the barricade.

There was no beating about the bush that solemn morning The American officer explained that this would be a desperate undertaking, and he said frankly that any man who wanted to back out was at liberty to do so. We all stood firm, but then you would not expect anything else from either nation. The truth was, after so much harassing from the Boxers, we were only too thankful to see the chance of getting something of our own back.

The Russians, from a direction which at the time was not very clear, were co-operating with us. We were to fix bayonets and rush the towers, but were not to fire until the Chinese were driven from their barricade. If the American officer fell, I was to assume command; and in the case of anything happening to me, the American corporal was to take charge. Not even the wounded were to be helped until the Chinese had been cleared out. A signal was to be given, then we were to jump a small wall, wheel to the left sharply, and shout and rush in.

I remember so clearly that just before the rush began a British corporal knelt by my side, and I knew that he was praying. I daresay, too, that his thoughts at that solemn moment went thousands of miles across land and sea to his folk at home.

In the darkness of the night a loud shout arose, a shout so ringing that it was heard by the refugees in the British Legation a quarter of a mile away—those who were waiting up with anxious hearts to hear the result of a sortie on which so much depended. It was known that if the dash failed the American Legation must be abandoned.

Fifty British and American marines stood to their arms in the dense darkness. So black was the night that it was impossible to distinguish a man near you, and quite out of the question to see where we were going.

With a wild cheer we rushed into the gloom.

I was very near the American officer, who almost at the outset had to retire, having run his knee against a spear which a runaway Chinaman had dropped. He could not advance with us, but he remained on the wall, cheering and encouraging us until he knew that our victory was certain. His wound laid him up for the rest of the siege.

In the dense gloom I saw figures approaching. I knew that the Russians were expected, but did not know from which direction they were to advance.

Who were the shadowy figures?

Was I to order the three or four men who alone could use their rifles effectively at that particular spot to fire, or was I to take my chance of being overwhelmed by the Boxers?

It was a terrible moment.

The forms came nearer and nearer.

I did not know what to do. Then a sort of inspiration seized me. I knew three words of French—"*Parlez vous Français?*" and I took it that the Russians would understand them, too.

I whispered into the darkness: "*Parlez vous Français?*" whispered, because I did not wish the presence of our tiny force at

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that precise point to be known. There was no answer.

The risk was heavy, but I did not shrink.

Only a foot away from me was a human form.

I gave my order—"Fire!"

Into the black night there flashed the fire of rifles, and on the air there rose the sting of the report. Instantly there was a scurrying of feet, and there were cries of fear, and I exulted, for I knew that the forms which could be only guessed and not seen, were flying Boxers, and that in all probability the barricade was ours.

The position was indeed won, and for the present we waited.

I noticed that the man next to me was very quiet. I spoke, but he did not answer. I put out my hand, and swiftly drew it back, for it was covered with his warm blood. When he was taken to the rear it was found that he had been dead for some time, and I think he must have fallen at the very outset.

When the dawn came we left our cover, and in the grey light I saw a ghastly spectacle. In a very small space nearly thirty Chinamen were lying in a heap, dead and wounded, with banners, spears, rifles, and straw matting, all mixed up.

We began to gather trophies, and even as we did so our merciless foe reopened fire from a barricade about a hundred yards away. Heavy guns, too, shelled us, making a deafening din, a row which was intensified by the beating of tom-toms, the firing of crackers, and the mad shouting of the Boxers. They glory in commotion.

Rain, followed by a heavy mist, obscured our position, which we set to work to strengthen. Then we discovered our allies the Russians strengthening the place, too. Almost as soon as we found them, their commanding officer, a Count, was wounded on the head by a stone which the Boxers dislodged. I gave him some whisky, bandaged his head, and he withdrew. Very soon afterwards the British corporal fell, shot through the foot. I offered him whisky, but he refused to take it. "The Lord will help me to bear the pain," he said, like a simple Christian, and I did not question his faith. I had him taken to the British Legation.

Rain fell heavily and pitilessly, making us utterly miserable as we continued to strengthen the barricade. We English and Americans chatted with the Russians in our language, and they answered in their own tongue. Neither side understood a word that was said, but we got along most amicably—perhaps for that very reason.

At ten in the morning we were relieved. For twenty days the Chinese dead were left unburied; then, during an armistice, the decomposing bodies were removed. A favourite trick of the Chinese was to wait till a stray horse or two came close up to our barricades, and then they would shoot the animals and leave us to bear the evil smell.

Meanwhile, on July 4th, which is Independence Day in America, our cousins celebrated the successful storming—an event which they looked upon as the greatest feature of the siege.

It was pleasant to listen to their cheers of triumph, but those sounds, glorious though they were, sank into insignificance compared with the noise I listened to a few weeks later, when, after much more weariness of waiting and privation, I heard the rousing music which the rat-tat-tat of the Maxim makes, and saw the first of the Relief troops, the Rajputs of the Indian Army of Great Britain, enter the Pekin Legations.

AN AWKWARD PREDICAMENT.

She was desperately gone on them both,
And couldn't think which one to choose;
'Twas rather perplexing, no doubt—
For one she was bound to refuse.

She gazed at them both in despair,
Quite puzzled to know what to do;
As soon as she thought about one
She cared for the other one too.

They still remained under her gaze,
Not knowing the trouble they'd brought;
It really was hard to decide
They both were so charming, she thought.

She couldn't say which one she'd have,
Her efforts fell hopelessly flat;
It's really exceedingly hard,
Selecting an up-to-date hat!

Dorothy Harrison.

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CUPID UP TO DATE

The Story of His Matchmaking.

By
Kathleen A. Simmons.

His real name was Billy, and he lived with his father and mother in an old ivy-covered Grange in the Midlands, within sight of the Wrekin. Round the distant hill were woven many charming legends, and the boy, always, like many only children, a little fanciful, loved a legend of any sort. His keen blue eyes, that never missed the earliest primrose or blackberry, and detected the nest of the most secretive whitethroat, were apt to turn dreamy at the slightest hint of a fairy story, and his strong little coffee-tinted hands gripped "Grimm" and "Andersen" as eagerly as they gripped the handles of the cutter in the big hayfield.

When the boy was eight years old he had a visitor. The visitor was a girl, and she was exactly ten years older than the boy. All the summer visitors came and went at the Grange; but this was the first time the boy had played host. For the girl's arrival accidentally clashed with a week-end invitation from a neighbouring county for her host and hostess. The latter, indeed, offered to stay with her guest, but the girl would not hear of it.

"Leave me to make friends with Billy," she said. "I shall be perfectly happy, he looks such a dear."

The mother laughed.

"What, in those old rainy-day clothes?" she replied. "The two days you have been here have been so wet that you have seen nothing of him—he lives in the barn in bad weather, and wears out all his old clothes! We shall only be away three days. You're sure you don't mind?"

"Quite sure," said the girl steadily. "And don't make him dress up for me; it is his face I shall look at."

When the boy woke on the sunny morning after his mother went away, he decided that a certain amount of deference was due to the visitor who had been left a special charge in his care.

He washed his neck painstakingly and put on a clean suit of flannels. He made his parting three times over, and dabbed his hair with an extra wet brush.

Lastly, the boy went to his toy-cupboard and took out his bow and arrows. These he adjusted to a nicety, and then left the room. He passed down the shallow staircase through the hall, and out on to the lawn. And there was the girl.

She, too, had dressed to suit the weather, and the old, ivy-covered house made a charming background for the slender figure clad in fresh, pink cotton. She was looking across the croquet-lawn, beyond the Shirley poppies and the dahlia bed, towards the big hayfield in front of the house.

As the boy's footfall sounded on the gravelled carriage drive, she turned to greet him. She caught her breath suddenly, and then she laughed a little and said, very quickly:

"Oh, Cupid!"

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The boy looked a little bewildered.

"My name's Billy!" he said.

The girl laughed right out.

"D'you know, for a moment I quite forgot? It seemed to me that it must be—Cupid! Haven't you ever heard of Cupid?" she added quickly.

The boy shook his head.

"Who was he? Anybody you know?"

"Oh, dear, no. It's in mythology—a fairy tale, you know."

The boy's eyes shone; but before he could make any comment the breakfast gong sounded. While eating his third slice of bread and honey, the boy asked suddenly:

"What's the name of that mythy person you said just now?"

"Cupid," said the girl.

"Could you tell me about him, d'you think? Or don't you talk at breakfast? Some visitors don't."

"*I* do," replied the girl smiling. "But it's too long to tell you now, and it doesn't quite go with bacon and marmalade. Shall we keep it for the hayfield later?"

She laughed a little and said, very quickly: "Oh, Cupid!"

The boy nodded.

"I've got a lot of things to do," he said slowly. "Feeding the animals is one; fetching the pudding milk from the farm's another. I go and fetch it 'cos they're sometimes rather late in sending. But I'll hurry up and have an hour in the hayfield before going up to the farm. You can tell me then."

"Aren't you going shooting?" asked the girl.

The boy looked down at the arrows at his side.

"I'm only going to c'lect the eggs," he said seriously.

"Why not with a basket?" asked the girl.

The boy shook his head.

"They are scarce just now. That's why I take the bow and arrows. It's for the broody hen."

He paused and took a bite of bread and honey.

"You see," he explained, "I get a farthing for each egg I find. And the broody hen's just the worry of my life. She lays all over the place; you never know where to look, and if I don't watch she'll 'scape me and sit after all. Mother doesn't want chickens now—she wants eggs. Every day I have to chase that horrid bird. First I have to find her, then get her off the nest. And an arrow does the trick in half-a-minute."

"You don't hit her?" asked the girl quickly.

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"No, you needn't be 'fraid," said the boy. "I just go round the field and shoot through the top of the hedge every here and there, and as soon as I chance on the right spot, out she comes as hard as she can, and I cut across the field and get the eggs 'fore she's got breath enough to get back to them."

"It must cost you a small fortune in arrows," remarked the girl gravely.

The light of battle shone in the boy's eye.

"I don't seem to mind so long as I find the broody hen! I pretend it's Red Indians, and she's the enemy, and the egg is the spoil—and sometimes it's pirates—and—don't tell anyone, will you?—but the hay's the waves. I go right through it."

He glanced up to see if the girl looked shocked, but she didn't.

"I don't play pirates often!" he added hastily. "But truly it's quite like war with the broody hen; she's the worry of my life."

An hour later, the enemy routed and a capful of eggs—sure proof of victory—by his side, the boy sat in the hayfield, his blue eyes fixed on the distant Wrekin, and his ears attentive to the story of Cupid. Grimm and Andersen were familiar; mythology was new ground. The girl's voice was expressive, and she was a born story-teller. The hours passed quickly.

The boy, privately, found the story of Cupid disappointing.

"It seems to me 'tisn't much catch to go round bringing people happiness and getting left out yourself," he said at last. "And being blind, so that half the time you don't know what you're doing—and perhaps it will all go wrong. Tell me about some chap who did things for himself—who was just splendid!"

"Just splendid," was the boy's pet phrase.

So, with a twinkle of mischief in her pretty eyes, the girl leant back against a sun-warmed hayrick and waxed into eloquent description of Phœbus Apollo, the sun-god.

"Oh, Cupid, can't you picture him?" she said with a little laugh. "All shining and splendid, in a glittering car that is neither silver nor gold, but perhaps the colour of this hayfield when the sun is setting—just a warm, pinky-golden that no gold on this earth ever gets near! His face is gleaming with the exhilaration of the evening race—a god and a car against the setting sun—a swift, swift rush through the last, lingering rays of sunlight: if he loses—if he loiters—then a late sunrise on the morrow! Think of it!"

The boy thought, enraptured. The girl, enthralled by her subject and her audience, and the time and the place, had forgotten to choose her words; but the boy's quick fancy leapt to meet her own, and he caught the spirit of the legend which no long or unfamiliar words could keep from his ken.

"That's just splendid!" he said, rising reluctantly. "And now I must go up to the farm."

But all day long his thoughts kept recurring to the morning's story, and he allowed his visitor to call him Cupid unrebuked. The word was ready opening for further questioning and further reply, and the subject of the great and glorious Olympians chimed in with the gorgeous summer's day.

After tea, the girl accepted the offer of a drive in the dog-cart. The boy could not go; he had remembered that a man from the village was coming to take measurements for a new kennel-run. He had promised his father that he or the groom would be at home when the carpenter came. Gregory must go with the dog-cart; the boy must stay.

So the girl set out on her drive, and when the carpenter had come and gone, the boy crossed the big hayfield in front of the house, and sat down on the stone wall that overlooked the high road. It was much too early to expect the dog-cart back, he knew that, but it was rather jolly sitting on a wall in the sunset, swinging one's legs, and looking across a field of wind-blown pinky-golden hay, that was like——

And then the wonderful thing happened.

From far up the winding road there came the sound of a low, melodious chime, followed by the swiftly-nearing rush of wheels. Through the sunlit country approached a glinting, glittering car, gleaming and curving in the last powerful rays of sunset. Almost before the boy could realise its nearness it came and passed—slowed up as it neared the top of the hill, and then—could he believe his eyes?—turned sharply round again. Nearer it came and nearer; there was a quick exclamation of surprise, and three words rang out on the still evening air:

"Cupid, by Jove!"

The boy trembled slightly. His bow was still slung round his neck, but the sheath that in the morning he had filled with arrows was now empty of its legitimate contents. In their place, in the depths of the wicker case, lurked a bottle of ginger pop, freshly brewed that morning by the mother of the village carpenter. The boy had not touched it; he had meant the girl to have first drink.

"Cupid—as I live!" repeated the stranger.

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He lifted a curious, helmet-like arrangement from his head, and looked into the boy's blue eyes with eyes as blue. He was very good to look at. His face was flushed with the ardour of the race, and, now that his head was bare, the evening breezes stirred the loose, fair hair upon his forehead, and gave him a curiously fresh, youthful air.

The boy, dumb with excitement and admiration, waited for the stranger to speak.

"D'you know where I can get a drink, Cupid?" he asked.

The boy took the bottle from the wicker case.

"It's two miles to the village," he said, "but I've got this. You can have it."

The stranger drank eagerly.

"Nectar!" he exclaimed.

"What's nectar?" asked the boy.

"The drink of the gods!"

The boy's eyes danced.

"Then—then you are Phœbus Apollo!"

The stranger looked sharply at the little figure before him. Phœbus Apollo—was he?

His mind travelled over the events of the day—the week. He thought of two past wet days, spent in enforced idleness in a Midland country inn—days in which he had lounged and smoked with fellow motorists, and, finally, after a heated argument that had lasted into the small hours of a summer night, had taken up a foolhardy and foolish wager regarding the covering of a certain district round the Wrekin in an incredibly short space of time.

He laughed aloud, even while his face flushed red. He—a god? He mentally anathematised himself as a fool—but a glance at the setting sun cut short his thoughts and his regrets. Whatever happened, he must stick to the terms of his wager.

"I'm afraid I'm not the god you take me for, youngster!" he said whimsically.

The boy flushed.

"I know it's a 'myth'!" he said gravely. "But you looked like him when you came up the hill."

The man flushed again in his turn.

"Well—I guess Phœbus Apollo's a good enough name for a chance encounter," he said laughing.

Then he glanced at the sun, now fast disappearing behind the Wrekin.

"Lost five precious minutes," he muttered ruefully. "I must go. Thanks, Cupid; that has bucked me up as much as a cocktail. Good-night! You'll be asleep long before my run is over, so it is good-bye as well."

And he was gone, leaving the boy deeply ruminative.

"What did they eat and drink on Mount Olympus?" he asked the girl at supper-time.

"Nectar and ambrosia."

"You're sure?" he said. "It wasn't nectar and cocktails, was it?"

The girl's sense of humour betrayed her; she laughed immoderately.

"What has put cocktails into your little head?" she asked.

But the boy would not tell her. Presently he went to bed, and as he undressed he remembered the key of the kennel-run—he had not put it back in his father's study.

He dashed out of bed, and searched the pockets of his flannel suit. String—toffee—a few nails—a chipped golf-ball—and three farthings—no key.

For a moment he stood stunned with the enormity of the loss; then he remembered that he had left it out on the wall of the hayfield.

He went to his bedroom window. It was a bright moonlight night, and he was no coward. Every square yard of land about the Grange was familiar ground on which fear could not assail him—but the high road was another matter. Would it do in the morning?

He remembered his father's words:

"Mind, I trust you with that key—no monkey tricks with the dogs while I'm away."

He sought his shoes and stockings, and a few minutes later, with flannels flung hastily over pyjamas, crept softly down the staircase.

The boy scuttled across the croquet-lawn, leapt the low wall, right among the Shirley poppies that now nodded with sleep, and dashed across the hayfield, whistling lustily to show how little afraid he was. In a niche in the moss-grown wall he saw the key, and with a delighted whoop, that was louder than he knew, he clutched it firmly in his fist and turned homewards. And at that moment a faint sound smote his ears, something that was neither groan nor call, but a mixture of both.

The boy beat down manfully a temptation to run, and looked over the wall.

And there, in the high road, amid the ruins of his car, lay Phœbus Apollo. He moved slightly as the boy bent over him, and a smile of recognition flickered in his face—white and drawn in the moonlight.

"Cupid," he said faintly, "d'you think you

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can get help? I guess I'm pretty well smashed up."

* * * * *

As they were carrying him to the house the boy had a brilliant idea.

"Put him in the cottage, Gregory," he urged.

"I thought the cottages were empty," said the girl.

"No, miss," answered the groom. "He means the ground-floor room in the cottage next ours. It's furnished, and it is used when there's more visitors than the house will hold. That's a right good idea!—no stairs—whoa, steady, you silly!"

He paused with a threatening look at the two maids, who, in truth, were as desperately afraid of their poor, inanimate burden as if he had descended from Mount Olympus itself.

But all bad moments come to an end—Gregory's wife, hearing the stir of arrival, took command. She soothed the girl and scolded the maids, and installed the stranger on the bed in the cottage spare room, while the boy helped Gregory to harness the pony.

A couple of hours later the doctor came out of his patient's room. He left the door open, uttering a final injunction to Mrs. Gregory. He started nervously on the threshold of the cottage. Just outside the door, on the ledge of Nettle's kennel-run, the boy and girl were sitting, with the dog—separated only by the wire netting—nestled closely to them. The life of a prize dog is not all joy, and this hour of sudden, unexpected companionship was sweet to the little fox-terrier, who, for all her blue blood and long pedigree, was as affection-craving as a mongrel.

"That child ought to be in bed," said the doctor sharply. "And this one, too."

He was an old man, and he laid his hand with fatherly solicitude upon the girl's shoulder.

"Go to bed, my dear," he said. "We've done all we can for him to-night, and Mrs. Gregory is an excellent nurse. She's seen Gregory through a worse spill than this. If necessary, she shall have help in the morning. I'll be round early."

"Will he die?" asked the boy with quivering lips.

Low as the words were the sick man heard them.

"Die?" he called through the open door. "Not a bit of it—the gods are immortal."

* * * * *

The doctor had spoken truthfully concerning Mrs. Gregory's nursing powers. Within three weeks, Phœbus Apollo sat up in his bed and received four visitors at once—his host and hostess, the girl and the boy. Within six weeks he talked boldly of climbing the Wrekin; within nine he had climbed it. His car, repaired and sound, like its owner, lay idle in the big barn. The guest, no longer an invalid, seemed curiously reluctant to set foot in the glittering vehicle that had been the cause of his disaster. It was supposed that his nerves had not recovered tone; but Cupid, aghast at this reflection on his hero, knew otherwise.

"If I once turn my car out of the drive gates," explained Apollo, "it must be with my portmanteau on the back seat. I must clear out—when I'm well enough for that."

"You don't want to go, do you?" said the boy. "I shall tell mother that. You're *not* afraid, I knew you weren't. They all think you're *nervous*."

He spoke with unbounded contempt, adding shortly: "I'll let them know!"

"You won't do anything of the kind," said Apollo sharply. "Now, mind, Cupid."

"D'you *like* being thought nervous?" asked the boy slowly.

"I don't mind it—on occasions," replied the man, with a curious smile.

But though he lingered unaccountably, he made sure that his prolonged stay was not objectionable to his hostess, with whom, indeed, he was a favourite. He expressed his gratitude forcibly, with eyes and lips. He vowed that though he had lost a race, and a wager, he had gained a spell of summer and sunshine that he would never forget.

The two guests, with Cupid in attendance, wandered far and wide. When the hay was over, the orchard remained, and there, outside the little thatched cottage in which he had been nursed back to health, Phœbus Apollo sat with the girl, and, like the great Olympians of old, he found her none the less attractive because she was wholly mortal, wholly human. He loved to listen to her deep, haunting voice as she read aloud to him and to the boy.

"And don't go on till I come back, will you?" Cupid would say, as he picked up his bow and arrows and departed in wrathful pursuit of the broody hen. "You can talk till I come back. I shan't be a jiff."

But they seldom talked, though he was often away a very long "jiff." Somehow words meant so little in those brilliant sunlit hours. The boy, privately, decided that when he wasn't there they must be very dull. They were always so quiet when he got back.

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One morning the boy was awakened by a soft thud on the pillow beside him. Someone had flung something through the open window. He rubbed his eyes and looked. It was a mushroom. He ran to the window and looked out.

"You're a nice one," said Phœbus Apollo.

"I forgot—and I overslept," said the boy. "I'll be down in a jiff."

"Where are yours?" he asked the girl ten minutes later. "Didn't you get any? Then there can't be many out yet." He surveyed Phœbus Apollo's sparsely-filled handkerchief with relief.

"There were shoals," said the man. "But these were all we were able to get. We had something else to think of—we've been talking——"

The boy's incredulous eyes tickled the girl's quick sense of humour even at that moment.

"Oh, Cupid dear!" she said. "Let's tell you quick and first. We were talking of next summer, when we're coming again—together—because—because—I have promised——"

"——To be Mrs. Phœbus Apollo!" said her lover gravely.

The breakfast gong drowned the boy's reply. He stopped at his first piece of bread and honey, and the girl followed him into the garden. Phœbus Apollo followed the girl.

"Cupid," she said, "you'll be my page, won't you?"

"You'll have to be quick," said the boy. "I won't be a page after I'm nine, even for you."

Phœbus Apollo chuckled.

"Now you'll *have* to fix an early day!" he old the girl.

He ran to the window and looked out.

There was no answer; she was looking out across the big hayfield—the man was looking at the girl. They had forgotten Cupid; they were thinking of the nearness of the future.

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Picture Paragraphs.

The Editor is Always Pleased to Purchase Curious Photographs Suitable for Use in these Pages. All Pictures Submitted should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

A MONUMENT TO FAILURE

TELL it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, but many preachers fail to draw congregations by the excellence of their sermons. Yet all places where these minor tragedies occur do not, like Sonning, commemorate the fact in the design of their church weathercock.

At Sonning a certain incumbent's sermons were dry, dull, and dreary. To revenge themselves the inhabitants had affixed to the church roof a weathercock representing their spiritual guide preaching to empty chairs. History does not relate whether the unfortunate cleric grinned and bore the blow, or folded his tent like the Arabs and silently stole away.

It seems hardly kind to draw public attention to a preacher's want of talent in this pointed way, and although the poor gentleman may have been outwardly pleasant about it, surely he must have hidden an aching heart beneath a sickly mask of mirth.

Photo *H. W. Nicholls.*

A weathercock erected at Sonning over the church of a Dean who failed to attract congregations by his eloquence. The weathercock represents him preaching to empty chairs.

MANY BIRDS.

THE ancient Romans used to draw auguries from the flight of birds—two or three birds. What they would have deduced from the flight pictured below is beyond the wit of man to imagine.

The illustration represents a gathering of birds on the Senegal River prior to migration. They were a size smaller than our old friend the sparrow, and had large red beaks like the hawfinch. They came together for days in flights of three or four hundred at a time, and finally the country was a mass of birds. Spectators had no need to inquire in the words of the old song:

What does little birdie say?

That was quite apparent, and some pleasure was expressed when the birds left.

Nevertheless, it was pleasant to be awakened in the morning by friendly twittering, and to speculate in the evening how many more birds would arrive next day.

Photo *J. Russell Roberts.*

A gathering of birds on the Senegal River previous to migration. They were smaller than a sparrow, and had large red beaks. According to an eye witness there were many millions of them.

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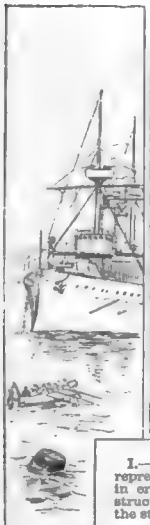
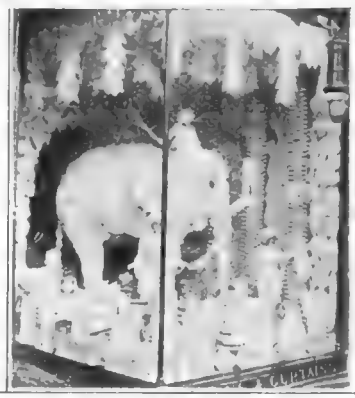
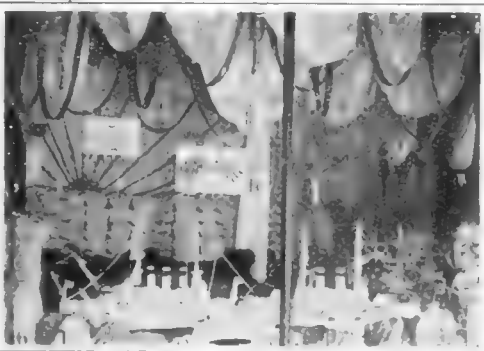
Window-Dressing Extraordinary.

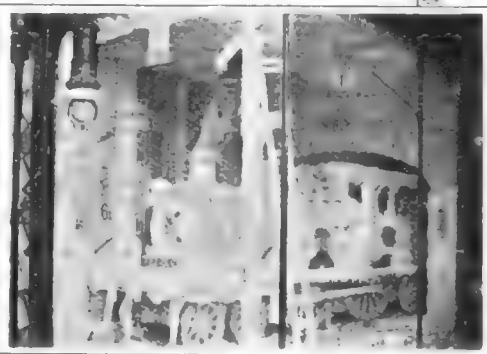




I.—This window was carried out in handkerchiefs to represent a scene in Naples, with the volcano Vesuvius in eruption in the background. Four palaces, constructed of cardboard, laths, and coloured paper, formed the structures on which the handkerchiefs were placed.

II.—A design which won first prize of a gold watch offered by the *Window Dressing Review*. It was made with handkerchiefs. The mahout every now and again hit the elephant on its ear, and made the elephant flap its ears, or wink its eyes, formed of red electric lights.





III.—This window, which gained a German Diploma for window dressing, represents the bombardment of Port Arthur, and was designed whilst the Russo-Japanese war was raging, and the fleet was attacking the town. The boats were made of Jap silk handkerchiefs.

IV.—A G.E. oil tank locomotive, constructed with household linen and cottons. The signal that is seen in the illustration, when dropped, caused the driver, a wax figure in the cab, to start the engine by releasing the handbrake, which action made all the wheels revolve.

V.—A story without words. The group represents a highwayman "holding up" a coach, and a lady within offering all she possesses a special line in handkerchiefs. The whole scheme, horses, coach, postillion, and highwayman were carried out with handkerchiefs.

VI.—A window that gained first prize in the *Drygoodsman*, St. Louis, U.S.A., Window Dressing Competition. This was constructed with towels, etc. The sails revolved, and the windmill windows were illuminated at night, which considerably enhanced the effect.

Photos *A. Maitland Keddie, Southend.*

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Photo *Exclusive News Agency.*

This peculiar bridge is situated at Sacavem, in Portugal. The question naturally arises: What is the use of it? since there is an eminently practical ordinary bridge, which appears in the background.

A PORTUGUESE PUZZLE.

THERE are those among us whose dejected cry: "Why were we ever born?" goes up unceasingly. Perhaps more excusable is the traveller's inquiry on beholding the bridge of Sacavem, in Portugal: "Why was it ever built?" There would seem at first to be no reasonable answer to this query, whatever may be the case with the one cited above.

For, a little further on, appears a plain, straightforward bridge of the ordinary pattern.

Some have argued that the curly bridge was constructed to afford gentle yet healthy exercise for the men and animals of Sacavem. Others suggest that someone told the architect he could not build such a bridge if he tried.

But, as with many problems, there is a simple solution, so obvious when it is pointed out that the questioner is at a loss to know why he did not discover it unaided.

Clearly, the practical Portuguese reflected: if our ordinary bridge breaks down, what shall we do? So they built an emergency one.

A DRY DIVE.

THE public appetite for the sensational is insatiable as of old. Looping the loop, circling the circ, high water dives, dives in flaming sacks—all have palled, all leave the spectator jaded, blasé, yawning.

At this crisis M. Gadbin comes forward to satisfy all cravings for the sensationally spectacular. His act is a species of combined looping the loop with a break in the loop at a certain point, and a high dive. The great novelty in his case is that he makes a dive of sixty-six feet and alights on his unprotected hands, impinging on an inclined plane.

Needless to say, he stands an excellent chance of breaking his neck. A touch of nervousness at the critical moment, a slight miscalculation, and instead of pitching on the erection placed to receive him he would be precipitated into the space which yawns between his points of departure and arrival.

These things explain why people go to see him dive. He has created quite a sensation in Paris.

His performance is a very breathless affair altogether. The heart starts climbing into the spectator's throat as M. Gadbin commences climbing to his elevated perch.

It pauses there fluttering while the intrepid athlete gathers himself for the leap.

He leaps, and as he reaches the inclined plane in safety, the spectator's heart returns to its normal position with a thud.

Some people may consider the spectacle worth this cardiac disturbance, but it is a moot point.

Photo *M. Rol.*

M. Gadbin, an athlete, is making in Paris a 66 ft. "dry dive," alighting on his unprotected hands. The dive is made from the scaffolding at the back.

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AN ALGERIAN WATER CARNIVAL.

THIS beautifully decorated craft was one of the most admired competitors in a water-carnival which took place at Algiers. The vessel was called "The Cradle of Moses," and though the analogy does not appear to be quite exact except that in both cases there was a cradle, the boat with its cargo of pretty children provided a most charming spectacle.

The clever designer and "skipper" of the little vessel was Mlle. Thérèse Dieu, who won fadeless laurels for herself by means of her inspired scheme of decoration.

The carnival was a magnificent sight. All the inhabitants of and visitors to Algiers flocked out to bask in its glorious sunshine, and admire the decorated boats which clever fingers had transformed into what might well have been elfin argosies floating on a fairy sea. Cries of admiration escaped from the onlookers, particularly when Mlle. Thérèse and her "Cradle of Moses" burst on their view.

Photo "L'Electro," Walter Anbell, Algiers.

One of the decorated boats in an Aquatic Battle of Flowers held at Algiers. It was called "The Cradle of Moses," and the "skipper" was Mlle. Thérèse Dieu. Why it was christened the "Cradle of Moses" is a mystery.

THE LARGEST CLOCK IN THE WORLD.

POOR old Big Ben has been ousted from his pride of place as the monarch of the clock world. And, to add insult to injury, the wearer of his one-time crown is the time-piece adorning a soap factory!

Messrs. Colgate and Company have recently erected a mammoth clock at their soap works in Jersey City, U.S.A., which is not only the largest in the world, but has a dial area more than twice as large as that of its nearest competitor. The hour-hand which appears below, measures fifteen feet from end to end, and requires sixteen men to carry it.

Photo Scientific American.

Sixteen men carrying the enormous hour-hand of the clock of Colgate & Company's Jersey City factory, the largest clock in the world.

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THE PINE LAKE CONSPIRACY

The Story of a Pious Fraud.

By T. C. Bridges.

I.

Every Saturday evening the bachelor part of the English colony at Pine Lake met at Scott's Saloon. For one thing, it was the only saloon kept by a Britisher; for another, it boasted the only English billiard table within a hundred and fifty miles. Scott provided supper at fifty cents a head, and his rye whisky, at two drinks a quarter, was a degree better than the tangle-foot sold at the rival American show.

For a set of more or less stony-broke orange growers, the Pine Lakers were a singularly cheerful crowd, and every Saturday a roaring game of ten cent pool began after supper, and went on till closing time. Of all the twenty odd young Britons whose habit it was to meet at Scott's, the most cheerful and irresponsible was Robert Arthur Algernon Abercrombie, better known to his intimates as "Crumbs." Crumbs had only been in Florida about a year, but there was not a finer quail shot, a better polo player, or a cooler hand at poker or pool in the county. He so rarely missed the weekly festivals at Scott's that when, one Saturday evening in early October, the game began without him, pompous old Scott himself was moved to ask if Abercrombie were sick.

"Not he," answered Gerald Lane, chalking his cue. "Saw his pony hitched outside the post-office. Hullo, talk of the devil. Coming in, Crumbs? You can have two lives."

But Crumbs, to the general amazement, shook his head, and walked slowly up to the bar. "Canadian Club," he said, and put away two drinks in rapid succession.

This was unlike Crumbs, who was usually very moderate.

Lane was quite concerned. "What's the trouble, old man? No bad news?"

"Couldn't be worse," replied Crumbs gloomily. "The governor's coming out."

"W-what—yours?"

"Whose else, Juggins? Here's his letter. I've just got it."

The table was deserted. The five players gathered round Crumbs with faces almost as long as his.

"Cable him yellow fever's broke out," suggested a short, stout youth named Croft.

"No good. He started by the *Teuton'c* last Saturday. He's in New York already."

"Too bad!" exclaimed old Scott, who, if pompous, was a good sort. "You'll have to skip out, young fellow."

"But what's the trouble?" put in Aylmer, a friend of Lane, who had just come up from the Everglades, and was a stranger to the Pine Lake district. "What's Abercrombie kicking about? I only wish my old governor

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would come out. I'd make him build me a house. I'm sick of camping in a log shack."

It was Lane who replied. "You've hit it in once, Aylmer. Crumbs hasn't got a house."

Aylmer looked puzzled. "Can't his father put up at the Magnolia?"

"But Crumbs ought to have a house," explained Lane. "His father thinks he's got one."

"Oh," remarked Aylmer blankly.

"It's worse than that," broke in Crumbs mournfully. "Poor old chap, he thinks I've got ten acres of young orange trees, and a stable, and a hog pen, and a lot of Cochin China chickens."

Croft gave a howl of laughter. "Cochin China chickens. My sainted aunt!"

"I had to write about something," retorted Crumbs crossly. "And they're the only sort I know."

"Do you mean that you've been stuffing up your father with yarns of that sort when you haven't got a grove at all?" demanded Aylmer.

But Crumbs took no offence. "I had to. The old man's dead nuts on farming. And I always did bar it. He gave me five hundred when I came out to buy a grove, but I blued most of it on the way across, and the rest has gone since. Got some value for the cash anyhow, which is more than you chaps have."

There was a sympathetic silence. Not a man in the room but secretly wished he had the price of his profitless property still in his pocket.

"What I want to know is what I'm to do now," continued Crumbs abjectly. "The old man will be here by Wednesday."

Croft chuckled again.

"I'll break your neck if you laugh any more," exclaimed Crumbs with sudden ferocity.

Croft shut up abruptly. The others looked at one another.

"You couldn't rent a place, I suppose?" suggested Aylmer.

Crumbs shook his head. "Haven't fifty dollars left. No, I'll have to go down in the flat woods after quail and shoot myself by accident. It's rough on the old boy, too. He's a good sort."

There was silence again. They were all very sorry for Crumbs, but truly the case seemed beyond remedy.

Suddenly Lane brought his fist down on the counter. "Did you ever tell your father exactly where your grove was, Crumbs?"

"No," was the surprised reply.

"You're going north next week, aren't you, O'Connor?" went on Lane, turning to a long Irishman behind him.

"I am that."

"Well, lend your place to Crumbs while you're away. It's just about ten acres; it's young trees. He'll look after it for you. His dad'll never know the difference."

"You've got pigs, too," put in Croft slyly.

"But no Cochins," added O'Connor, looking at Crumbs.

A light of hope was dawning on the latter's face. "Hang the Cochins!" he exclaimed. "Will you do it, O'Connor?"

"Faith, I will," was the laughing reply.

"Gad, you are a good chap!" cried Crumbs fervently. "Scott, drinks all round, please."

But next minute his face fell. "Someone's dead sure to give the show away," he said.

"None of us will," declared Lane.

"No, I know you won't. But there are others."

"Don't think anyone's got a special grudge against you, Crumbs."

"H'm, no, except Mother Appleyard."

There was a general chuckle. "Because you didn't propose to the fair Mabel," grinned Lane.

"Lord, I thought she'd have popped the question herself," said Abercrombie with a shudder, and the rest roared.

When silence was restored, Lane spoke more seriously. "Look here, you chaps. This'll be pretty rough on Crumbs if it doesn't come off. All of you tell everyone you know to keep their mouths shut. See?"

All vowed they would do so, and presently Crumbs, who was never serious for more than ten minutes at a time, recovered his spirits, took a cue, and, in spite of his handicap of a life, the pool as well.

II.

Crumbs had the job of his life to get the O'Connor place decent by Wednesday. O'Connor had put in most of his time with cattle down in the flat woods, and only used his Pine Lake house to spend occasional week-ends in. There was next to no furniture or cooking things, the house was full of dust, flies, and a very hungry brand of fleas; and as for the grove, you could hardly see the sickly, yellow little orange trees for the thickets of sorrel and couch grass which covered the sandy soil.

Poor Crumbs had to invest his few remaining dollars in hiring some furniture and bedding and buying stores. He put in three

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horrible days of scrubbing and dusting, and even went as far as to take a cooking lesson from Lane, a lesson which was probably the cause of more bad language and burnt food than any other instruction of the kind since the first orange was planted in Florida.

Wednesday arrived at last, and so did the Rev. Robert Abercrombie. Crumbs met him at the station with Dandy, his beloved polo pony, in a hired buggy, and drove him out over two miles of hot sandy road to the borrowed grove.

"Hope you won't mind roughing it, father?" said Crumbs as he lifted his father's portmanteau out of the buggy. "'Fraid the cooking won't be quite what you're accustomed to. Fact is, we orange growers haven't much time to bother about food. But I've got some tinned tongues and things."

"Don't you trouble your head, my boy," replied the Rev. Robert cheerily. "We shall do very well I'm quite sure. Now I'll just have a wash, and then you shall take me round the place and show me all your improvements. I'm uncommon keen to see them all."

Soon the Rev. Robert, sluiced and spruce, was waiting for his son on the veranda.

"Seems to me you have a deal of weed in your plantation," was his first remark as he glanced round the flat expanse of sand where sickly little orange trees showed their scraggy tops above a jungle of sorrel and couch grass.

"Er—ah, you see, we cut it for hay," replied Crumbs vaguely. "Makes fine feed, you know."

"What—feed horses on that stuff!" The Rev. Robert was plainly amazed.

"No, not horses—hogs," replied Crumbs hastily.

The old man fairly started. "Feed pigs on hay! Most extraordinary! Never heard of such a thing in my life. H'm, one lives and learns."

"Here are the hogs, you see," exclaimed Crumbs, hurrying towards the split rail hog pen.

His father eyed the razor-backed brutes. "Doesn't look to me as if they got enough to eat," he remarked with evident disapproval.

"Oh, they're all like that in Florida," declared Crumbs. "Different sort, you know, from English. The people about here simply won't eat fat bacon."

"So I should think, and now——"

"Great Scott, he's going to ask for those Cochins!" was Crumbs' unspoken thought. "Come and see the stable!" he put in quickly.

Crumbs did know how to look after a horse, and though the stable was only a shed, Dandy's surroundings deserved and received his father's commendation.

Crumbs' spirits rose. "It's nearly suppertime," he thought. "If I can only get him back to the house."

"I say, father," he said aloud, looking up at the sky, "we'd best get back to the house. It looks like foul weather."

"Talking of fowls," said the elder man instantly, "let's go and have a look at the Cochin Chinas. I'm specially anxious to see them."

"Father," said Crumbs desperately, "I must prepare you for a disappointment. Two days ago they were all eaten by a wolf."

"A wolf!" exclaimed the Rev. Robert incredulously.

"Er—I mean a fox," stammered Crumbs, "that is—I should say a wolfox. It's a wild animal, you know—very wild—awfully savage. It ate 'em all," he ended lamely.

"A wolfox—how very curious! What does it look like?"

"Hullo, Abercrombie, I just rode over to see if I could do anything to help you," came a cheery voice from the other side of the fence. Never in all his life had Crumbs felt so devoutly grateful for anything as he did just then for Lane's opportune appearance.

"Come in, Lane," he shouted, running forward and opening the gate. "Father, this is Lane, great pal of mine. He has a grove near here. Knows a lot more about it than I do."

"How do you do, Mr. Lane. My son was just telling me about the wolfox that raided his place the other day. Have you ever seen one?"

"Wolfox?" exclaimed Lane in blank bewilderment. Then he caught sight of Crumbs, who had dropped behind his father and was making desperate signs at him.

"Oh, yes, sir," he said, "I know now. It's a new breed. Very big and strong. Breaks down any kind of fence, and eats orange trees. Makes an awful hash of a grove."

The old man's face was a picture of amazement.

"Oh, you ass!" hissed Crumbs savagely from the background. "Chickens, you fool."

Luckily the Rev. Robert was a trifle deaf. He did not catch the aside.

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"Very fond of chickens, too, Mr. Abercrombie," went on Lane, without moving a muscle.

Happily for all concerned, at this moment down came the first big drops of the long-threatened shower. "Go in, father," cried Crumbs. "Lane and I'll follow as soon as we've put these bars up."

"All right," replied the Rev. Robert, turning up his collar. "You'll find me unpacking."

His coat tails fluttered in the distance, and a minute later, Crumbs and Lane, having replaced the split rails of the hog pen, also ran for the house.

"Jolly good job you came when you did, Lane," said Crumbs, as he plumped down on an empty packing-case on the veranda just outside the sitting-room window. "I was getting horribly flummoxed.

Then he caught sight of Crumbs, who had dropped behind his father and was making desperate signs at him.

"Fact is," he went on, gazing moodily out into the pouring rain, "I'm sick and ashamed of the whole business. The governor is one of the best, and I wish I'd never written him all those lies about the place. I tell you, Lane, if it wasn't that I'm so desperately hard up I'd make a clean breast of it all."

Lane looked sympathetic. Crumbs scratched a match, lit his pipe, and continued: "I've been an extravagant young ass, but apart from that, and deceiving the dear old boy, I've done nothing to be ashamed of. I played quite straight with the Appleyard girl—just a silly flirtation, nothing else.

"Gad, if I ever get the chance of a fresh start, I swear I'll buckle to if only to justify the governor's belief in me. It makes me feel a worm to see how he trusts me.

"But I'm hanged if I see how I can get out of it, and if it comes out now it'll be the very mischief."

"That reminds me," said Lane. "I came over to tell you that trouble's brewing. Mother Appleyard's on the warpath. Somehow she's heard of the game, and she's coming over to-morrow afternoon to put the old man wise."

Crumbs gasped. "Good Lord, Lane, what are we going to do?"

Lane shook his head.

"The old fiend!" groaned Crumbs. "There's only one thing for it," he went on, with the calmness of despair. "I'll have to murder her."

"Wait, let me think a bit," said Lane. "Look here," he went on after a pause. "How would it be if I made myself up in parson's kit, and entertained her while you took your father for a walk. Sylton has some theatrical togs, you know."

A light of intense relief dawned in Crumbs' eyes. "D'ye think you could do it—that she wouldn't catch on?"

"I've done old men's parts," said Lane modestly. "I think I could do the trick all right."

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"By Jove, if you could!" exclaimed Crumbs fervently. "Lane, you're a brick. If you bring it off I can never be grateful enough."

III.

It rained again next morning, and Crumbs wrestled with a smoking stove and an ancient cookery book.

"Here's your clergyman come to call," said the Rev. Robert, looking into the kitchen where his hopeful son in his shirt-sleeves was desperately endeavouring to peel potatoes for luncheon.

"Our clergyman!" exclaimed Crumbs blankly.

"Yes, the Rev. Septimus Snell," looking at a visiting card which he held in his hand.

"Er—ah, ask him to come in, father. I'll be there in a jiffy."

"Now, who the blazes is the Rev. Septimus Snell?" he asked himself, as he hastily rolled down his sleeves and flung on his coat.

"Yes, sir, I am glad to be able to tell you that there is no more steady, hard-working young fellow in the settlement than your son," were the words which Crumbs heard as he hurried into the living room. A middle-aged parson with grizzled beard and sun-browned face was deep in conversation with his father. The newcomer wore a long clerical coat of dark grey material, and his soft black felt hat and worn black gloves lay on a chair beside him.

"How do you do, Abercrombie?" said the visitor getting up and greeting Crumbs cordially. "Didn't see you last Sunday. Suppose you were busy preparing for your father's visit?"

Crumbs shook hands speechlessly. What lunatic was this? His brain reeled at the prospect of fresh complications.

Suddenly the newcomer's left eye contracted in an unmistakable wink. Crumbs gave a gasp. "What you, La—Snell—Mr. Snell that is. I'm awfully glad to see you. Sit down. Have a drink? Here's the whis——"

Lane cut him short. "A little lemonade, thank you, Mr. Abercrombie," he said acidly.

"Steady, you ass!" he muttered under his breath. "Ask me to lunch."

Crumbs pulled himself together and did the polite. Then he excused himself and went back to the kitchen, through the half-open door of which he listened grinning to Lane's eulogies on his wonderful abilities as an orange grower.

Tinned tongue, boiled potatoes, and canned apricots were the menu, and immediately afterwards Lane got up. "I must be going, Mr. Abercrombie," he said. "Parochial duties, you know. Distances are great in this new country. I have been recommending your son to take you to see our new marmalade factory. It is not yet completed, but will eventually be a great boon to the growers."

"You haven't yet told me about that, Robert," said his father, turning to Crumbs. "I shall be delighted to see it."

"Ah, yes, we'll start at once," said Crumbs, who was in mortal terror lest Mother Appleyard might turn up before he could clear. Aside he muttered to Lane: "Where the blazes is the marmalade factory?"

"Hanged if I know. Show him the new Pine Lake water tower. That's near enough. And look here, leave the key on the veranda ledge."

As soon as Crumbs and his father were out of sight, Lane, who had hidden in a patch of palmette scrub, slipped back to the house, opened the door, and seated himself where he commanded a view of the road.

Sure enough, in less than half-an-hour Mother Appleyard's buckboard hove in sight, and the lady herself, a gaunt, bilious-faced New Englander in a terrible new bonnet, hitched her horse to the fence and sailed in.

"Be you Mr. Abercrombie?" she demanded in a high nasal tone as Lane opened the door.

"That is my name, madam. But no doubt it is my son whom you wish to see."

Mrs. Appleyard snorted. "No, 'tain't him as I'm looking for. To say truth, I don't ever want to set eyes on thet young feller again."

Lane looked properly surprised.

"It's you as I want to see, if so be you're his pa."

"Take a chair, madam. You appear to be a little heated."

"Heated, you say. I reckon I be. I've got enough ter heat ten. The way that feller's treated me an' mine."

"I trust, madam——" began Lane.

She cut him short. "You, too. He's a-treating you most ez bad as he has me an' my darter."

"I fail to comprehend you, madam."

"Oh, I'll help you to comprehend. You think ez this place is his, don't ye?"

"I am certainly under that impression."

"Well, 'tain't," snapped the lady. "'Tain't any more his than 'tis mine. It belongs to

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Mr. O'Connor, the Irish gentleman as went back home last week."

"Madam, you amaze me."

"Oh, I'll amaze you more before I'm through. I guess you reckon ez your son bought this place with the money yew gave him. Wal, I jest tell yew he didn't do nothing o' the kind. He wasted it all drinking an' hoss racing. Then when he heard ez you were coming down, he borrowed this place jest to fool ye, and let on as it was his."

"Madam, these are terrible accusations. I can hardly bring myself to credit them." Lane's face was a study.

"Oh, I reckoned 'twould upset you. But 't in't right ez ye should be fooled like this. An' ef ye don't believe me, jest go an' ask any o' the folk in Pine Lake. They can't, none of 'em, deny it.

"There's some on 'em ez will lie to ye, I make no doubt," went on the terrible old woman. "Them like that Lane feller ez made the plot up. But ef ye don't believe me go an' look up the county records, or ask your son to show ye his title deeds."

"I shall take your advice, madam," said Lane rising. "And if I find that what you have told me is true, I assure you"—he brought his fist with a bang on the table—"I shall disinherit him. I shall cut him off with a shilling."

An expression of gratified malice crossed Mother Appleyard's face. "Thar, I've done my duty," she said. "An' now I kin go home an' face my poor darter, Mabel, with a clear conscience."

"My hat, what a woman!" exclaimed Lane, as the buckboard vanished creaking up the sandy track. "Now to get rid of these togs, and become myself once more."

When Crumbs and his father returned home they found Lane presiding at the stove and the best meal on the table that the Rev. Robert had seen since his arrival in the State.

Crumbs took the first chance of bolting into the kitchen, where Lane was making the toast.

"Did she come?" he inquired eagerly.

"You bet," grinned Lane. "My word, she's vicious! You ought to have heard her!"

"Lord, I'd have loved to. She didn't catch on who you were?"

"Not she," chuckled Lane. "I did the indignant parent to a T. I've cut you off with a shilling, Crumbs."

"Then it's all right?"

"For the present, yes."

"She's sure to find out sooner or later," groaned Crumbs.

"Probably will. Then look out for squalls."

"The only thing'll be to get the old chap away. But how to do it I haven't the ghost of a notion. He's as keen as mustard on the place."

Lane was pouring water into the teapot. "We'll work that out later," he said. "Supper's ready."

"It's not much of a house, this, Robert," said Mr. Abercrombie, as he took a second helping of Lane's excellent stew, and then glanced round at the little, box-like room with its outer walls reeking with damp. "How about building a new one? I think of doing something for you while I am out here."

Crumbs cast a glance of horror at Lane. "Oh, it's quite big enough," he said hastily, "quite enough for one man."

"I suppose the house was on the place when you bought it?"

"It's been built about four years," replied Crumbs, skilfully dodging the question.

"Oh, and you bought the property just as it stood. By the by, what did you pay for it? I don't think you ever told me."

"Er—let me see." Poor Crumbs was desperately seeking some way of avoiding the lie direct. But there was none. "Two thousand dollars I think it was," he said in a hesitating voice.

"Two thousand dollars—rather over four hundred pounds. And I gave you five. Indeed, I think you've managed very well, to pay your expenses out from England, stock the place, and live all this time on less than a hundred. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Lane?"

Lane's face went dull red. He muttered assent. As for Crumbs, he was the picture of misery.

"You're sure your title is all right, Robert?" went on his father. "A man I met in the train told me that titles to land are frequently doubtful in this part of the world."

"It's fearfully hot in here," burst out Crumbs, jumping up and flinging open the outer door. "Don't you think so, father?"

"No, I can't say I do," replied the elder man, looking at his son in mild surprise. "But you haven't answered my question, Robert. I shouldn't like to spend money here in building you a new house unless I was quite sure of your title to the property. Are you certain it's all right?"

Crumbs hesitated, then suddenly swung round and faced his father.

"I'm sick of telling lies," he exclaimed

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"I'm glad you had the courage to own up, Robert," he said very quietly.

violently, "I can't help it if you cut me off for good. I spent all the money you gave me, and borrowed this grove from a friend. The place isn't mine at all."

There was a curious light in the old man's eyes. For a moment he looked at his son in silence. The boy stood with downcast head, awaiting sentence. As for Lane, his one desire was that the floor would open and he could drop through it.

At last Mr. Abercrombie spoke. "I'm glad you had the courage to own up, Robert," he said very quietly.

The remark was so utterly unexpected that Crumbs merely stared in speechless amazement.

"You see," went on the Rev. Robert, "I knew all about it. Yesterday, when it began to rain I didn't go straight to my bedroom. I sat down here by the window, and quite inadvertently overheard the conversation between you and Lane."

"And you didn't"—Crumbs faltered and came to a dead stop.

"No, I said nothing at the time. I wanted to see how far you would carry this farce, and whether"—his voice took a sterner tone—"you would tell the truth when asked a direct question."

Crumbs said nothing. But he felt and looked extremely foolish. So for that matter did Lane.

"I realise now," went on Mr. Abercrombie, "that it was foolish of me to send you out here, young and inexperienced, with money in your pocket. You said yesterday that if you had the chance of a fresh start you'd buckle to. Did you mean it?"

"Indeed I did, father," replied Crumbs humbly.

"What sort of a fresh start? Not an orange grove, I presume."

"An orange grove is no good at all," declared Crumbs. "But there's a half share going in a store at Pine Lake."

"How much will that cost?"

"A thousand dollars."

Father looked at son, and there was a twinkle in his eye.

"You'll be able to sell oranges," he said drily, "and lean bacon and eggs—that is provided the—er, what is it—wolfox leaves the neighbourhood alone for a bit."

Crumbs could find no words.

A week later the Rev. Robert left for England. But before he went he gave his son a cheque for £200 to buy the half share in the store, and Crumbs pocketed it with a firm resolve to make good use of the money.

To this day Mother Appleyard wonders where he got the cash. But as far as Crumbs is concerned, she is never likely to get hold of the story.

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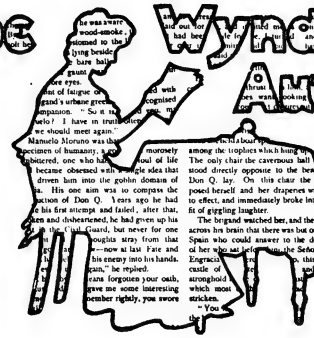
Phœbe Wyndham—Authoress



A Story in Letters.

By W. Freeman.

I.

From Miss Phœbe Wyndham to the Editor of "Weekly Bits."

Surbiton, Sept. 1st, 1908.

Dear Sir,

I am sending you a little story, entitled 'For Love of Priscilla," which I hope you will be able to publish in your delightful paper.

This is my *very* first attempt; the plot is, I think, *quite* original, and I have ideas for several others, if they would interest you.

Yours truly,
Phœbe Wyndham.

II.

From the Editor of "Weekly Bits" to Miss Phœbe Wyndham.

The Editor regrets that he is unable to avail himself of the kind offer of the inclosed MS., which he accordingly begs to return herewith.

Special Note.—All manuscripts submitted must be typewritten, and on one side of the paper only.

III.

From the Suburban Typewriting Company to Miss Phœbe Wyndham.

To Typing Two Copies of "For Love of Priscilla" ... £0 8 0

IV.

From Miss Phœbe Wyndham to the Editor of "The Universal Magazine."

Sept. 12th.

Dear Sir,

Inclosed is a short story, which I trust you may be able to accept for your magazine, of which I have been a constant reader from the first number.

You may remember taking my cousin, Mrs. Jackson-Johnson, in to dinner at Lady Scuttlebury's last month. It is because I heard from her that you then alluded to the difficulty of finding *strikingly original* stories that I am sending you "For Love of Priscilla."

Yours truly,
Phœbe Wyndham.

V.

From the Editor of "The Universal Magazine" to Miss Phœbe Wyndham.

The Editor regrets that, owing to lack of space, he is unable to accept the inclosed MS., which he accordingly returns, with thanks for the opportunity of considering it.

VI.

From Miss Phœbe Wyndham to the Editor of "The Lady's Own Journal."

Sept. 29th.

Dear Sir,

"For Love of Priscilla."

I am sending you a little story, which I hope you may be able to publish.

In the event, however, of its proving unsuitable (which I trust may not be the case), may I ask you to be good enough to explain in what respect my story is deficient?

Yours truly,
Phœbe Wyndham.

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VII.

From the Editor of "The Lady's Own Journal" to Miss Phœbe Wyndham.

The Editor regrets his inability to accept the inclosed contribution, the reasons for which are indicated by the "X" marked in the spaces below:

The story is too long
" " short X
" " slight X
" " sentimental
" " not sufficiently novel } X

VIII.

From Miss Phœbe Wyndham to Mr. Richard Bagster, of Fleet Street, E.C.

October 7th.

DEAR UNCLE DICK,

I have been sending the little story which I showed you some time ago to various magazines, but all the Editors have been simply horrid about it—one of them absolutely *insulting!*

Will you please advise me what to do? I had no idea that it was so difficult to become an authoress!

Your affectionate niece,
PHŒBE.

IX.

From Mr. Richard Bagster to Miss Phœbe Wyndham.

Oct. 8th.

MY DEAR PHŒBE,

There is a delicious simplicity about your letter which I find profoundly touching! I can only say that, since you are apparently determined to dabble in the most soul-corroding profession on earth, the best thing you can do is to pick up what hints you can from the brutal Editors who return your stuff—I beg your pardon—manuscript, and adapt yourself as far as possible to their requirements without plagiarising more than you can help.

Your affectionate uncle,
DICK.

P.S.—If you haven't already done so, you might try *The Family Companion*—from what I recollect of your story it is of the style they publish.

X.

From the same, to Mr. Paul Glayde, Editor of "The Family Companion."

Oct. 8th.

DEAR GLAYDE,

If it isn't too great a strain on your friendship, I should be rather glad if you could manage to squeeze into your delightful magazine a "first effort" on the part of a niece of mine, Miss Phœbe Wyndham by name. Her story is called "The Bliss of Selina," or something of the sort, and, judging from the fact that it occupied two penny exercise-books when I last saw it, should be about 3000 words long.

Yours, with as many apologies,
R. BAGSTER.

XI.

From Miss Phœbe Wyndham to the Editor of "The Family Companion."

Oct. 10th.

DEAR SIR,

If it will not inconvenience you I hope to call at your offices to-morrow to submit a short story of mine, entitled "For Love of Priscilla." I have previously sent it by post, but the last Editor who declined it upset a cup of coffee over page 7, and I thought it better to bring the manuscript myself.

Yours truly,
PHŒBE WYNDHAM.

XII.

From the same to Mr. Richard Bagster.

October 11th.

DEAR UNCLE DICK,

Following your advice, I called this morning at the offices of *The Family Companion*, and, after some trouble with the commissionaire at the door, succeeded in seeing the Editor.

He proved to be quite a young man, with extremely gentlemanly manners (I always thought that Editors were middle-aged and disagreeable!), and it also appears that he knows you quite well.

It ended in my leaving "Priscilla" with him for further consideration. He says that he will let me know as soon as possible, but that I may have to call again.

You're an old dear to have suggested such a sensibly-conducted paper.

Yours gratefully,
PHŒBE.

XIII.

From the Editor of "The Family Companion" to Miss Phœbe Wyndham.

DEAR MADAM, Oct. 14th.

"*For Love of Priscilla.*"

With reference to the above story and to your call here on Friday, I shall be glad to see you

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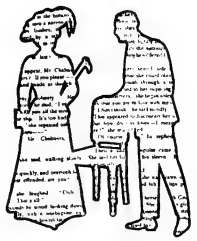
again, at any time during next week, to discuss one or two alterations which I think will be advisable before definitely accepting your story for publication.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL GLAYDE.



XIV.

From Miss Phœbe Wyndham to Mr. Paul Glayde.

October 15th.

DEAR SIR,

Thanks for your letter. I hope to call at your offices again at about twelve on Thursday next.

In the meantime, would it be imposing too greatly on your kindness to ask your *candid* opinion on the inclosed verses—"On Viewing Ditton Hill by Moonlight," which I hurriedly scribbled yesterday evening?

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours truly,
PHŒBE WYNDHAM.

XV.

From the Editor of "The Family Companion" to Miss Phœbe Wyndham.

Oct. 16th.

DEAR MISS WYNDHAM,

I have read your verses, which, although original, at times almost startlingly so, appear to me to possess one or two minor defects. For instance "moon" is hardly a perfect rhyme to "gloom," nor "silvery sheen" to "cerulean."

However, I shall be delighted to give you a more detailed criticism of them when I see you next.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL GLAYDE.

XVI.

Received this 9th day of November, 1908, the sum of two guineas, being payment for the entire copyright of story, entitled "For Love of Priscilla."

PHŒBE WYNDHAM.
To *The Family Companion* Co., Ltd.

XVII.

From Mr. Richard Bagster to Mr. Paul Glayde.

Nov. 10th.

DEAR GLAYDE,

I notice in to-day's copy of your paper a story by my indefatigable niece, and hope that your generosity in publishing it may reap its due reward.

Now, however, I am going to ask a fresh favour in connection with that young person. I had arranged to meet her and her aunt at Waterloo to-morrow for the evening performance at His Majesty's, but a sudden attack of gout (confound it!) has crippled me completely. I have taken a box, and don't want to disappoint Phœbe, whom I understand you have already met in an official capacity. Would you care to play proxy on my behalf? I know that to-morrow is a slack night with you; but if you're otherwise engaged, don't mind saying so.

Yours—again with apologies,
R. B.

XVIII.

Telegram from Mr. Paul Glayde to Mr. Richard Bagster.

Nov. 10th (6.30 p.m.).

Delighted to take your place; send tickets by return post.—GLAYDE.

XIX.

From Miss Phœbe Wyndham to Mr. Paul Glayde.

November 12th.

DEAR MR. GLAYDE,

Although I inclose another short story for your perusal, I am really writing to thank you for the perfectly *heavenly* evening which auntie and I spent yesterday, and for the trouble you took to make it such a success.

It has just occurred to me that if—as you mentioned—you think of giving up your flat at Streatham, and taking a small house at Surbiton, we may be able to persuade you to join our Mutual Improvement Society, although I expect you would smile at our poor little efforts at the Higher Culture.

Yours very sincerely,
PHŒBE WYNDHAM.

XX.

From Mr. Paul Glayde to Miss Phœbe Wyndham.

November 15th.

DEAR MISS WYNDHAM,

Many thanks for your kind letter. I have read the story which you sent with it, and have pleasure in

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accepting it for publication in *The Family Companion*

Though our friendship (if I may call it so) is comparatively of recent date, I have suddenly found myself emboldened to ask whether there will ever be any hope of your accepting something of mine in return.

Do you think that, if I called at Ditton Villa to-morrow evening, you would be able to give me an answer?

Yours sincerely,

PAUL GLAYDE.

XXI.

From Miss Phœbe Wyndham to Mr. Paul Glayde.

November 16th.

DEAR MR. GLAYDE,

Your letter reached me this morning.

I am not quite sure of your meaning, but if you care to call this evening to explain more fully, I shall be very pleased to see you.

Yours in haste,

PHŒBE WYNDHAM.

XXII.

From Mr. Paul Glayde to Miss Phœbe Wyndham.

November 16th
(11.25 p.m.).

MY DEAREST,

I am sending a late "good-night" note to tell you again how utterly and overwhelmingly happy you have made me. I had never the least idea that you "cared almost from the first," though I thought my own adoration was only too obvious.

Since I shall be living in Surbiton from now until we are married (it is to be in the spring, isn't it?) we shall be able to see each other every day.

Your own devoted,

PAUL.

XXIII.

From Mr. Richard Bagster to Mr. Paul Glayde and Miss Phœbe Wyndham.

November 17th.

MY DEAR KIDDIES,

Forgive this irreverent beginning, but after what has happened I feel more or less *in loco parentis*.

Please accept my congratulations and very best wishes for your happiness.

Please also accept my assurance that I foresaw, from the first, precisely what would happen.

I find that the older one gets the more delightful it is to be able to say: "I told you so!"

I shall, I think, give you a silver inkstand for a wedding-present.

This timely warning may prevent other misguided people doing the same thing.

But please note that it will be on condition that you, my dear Phœbe, use it to write no more stories, but rather spend your spare moments in overhauling the housekeeping accounts, since Editors are proverbially thriftless men.

And you, my newly-created nephew, I strongly advise to decline all future manuscripts sent by pink-cheeked, blue-eyed maidens of eighteen, whose mission in life should be rather to inspire love-scenes than to record them. Elderly and angular spinsters and middle-aged and cynical bachelors are the only people who can write "with the lovelight in her eyes, she sank blushing into his arms" (*vide* "Priscilla," Chap. III.) with conviction.

Among them you will no doubt include

Your affectionate uncle,

DICK.

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STUDIES IN DISDAIN

Members of the Fair Sex Wearing Haughty and Chilling Expressions, Sketched by Leading Humorous Artists; with Remarks Thereon by

F. E. BAILY.

"Yes, dear, she's very charming I daresay, but not *quite* in our set." A disdainful lady, sketched by Mr. T. Heath Robinson.

DISDAIN is peculiarly a feminine weakness. Even the best women do not root it out of their hearts, although no woman, good, bad, or indifferent, ever confesses to it. Instead, she owns with pride to a healthy contempt for such and such a thing. Disdain is a bond of union between women of all classes, and one touch of it makes them all kin. Sometimes they vent it on men, but generally on one another.

The particular variety kept for use on their own sex is ten times more venomous than that set apart for the abasement of mankind, though even the weaker brand is very deadly. The artists whose sketches illustrate these pages are connoisseurs in disdain. Indeed, it is very apparent from their work that they have all acquired their knowledge through long and bitter experience. Some of them must have suffered dreadfully.

Let us glance for a moment at Mr. T. Heath Robinson's sketch, the first of the series. Perhaps the lady he has drawn is more piercingly disdainful than any of the others. Hers is the subtle disdain of malicious intent, which inflicts a deep wound that refuses to heal. We glance at her rather narrow face, notice its acerbity and the relentless set of her small, thin-lipped mouth, and shudder. There is no armour that is proof against her. Safety lies in flight alone, and we fly accordingly to the drawing of Mr. Hassall.

A drawing by Mr. Hassall of Mrs. Jones in the stalls glancing round and looking past Mrs. Robinson (from the same suburb) in the pit.

Here is a good specimen of that fine, comfortable disdain peculiar to ladies of ample proportions, who would merit the adjective "motherly" if it were not for the atmosphere of haughty scorn that wraps them round like a garment. Their mission in life is always to go one better than Mrs. Robinson next door. We do not resent their disdain, partly because it is so robust as to have an almost bracing effect, and partly because they enjoy the exercise of it so thoroughly that we feel a

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Waitress casting disparaging glances at a second waitress whose hat is a trifle larger than her own, sketched by Mr. Tom Browne.

glow of philanthropic joy at being the means of calling it forth. Indeed, the sensation almost equals that engendered by bestowing twopence on a beggar.

Mr. Tom Browne has evidently found his subject among the large and attractive class of young women who follow the laborious calling of the waitress. The girl he has drawn is employing an intensified form of the glance which gives us that clammy feeling when one of her kind trains it on us after we have informed her deferentially that this is our lunch hour, and not our annual holiday. She wishes to humiliate a rival in a larger hat than her own; the sympathies of most people will be with the rival.

The study by Mr. Harrison shows us one of a numerous band of worthy women who constitute themselves a standing commission to act as censors of the "goings on" of all and sundry. Alas! their laws are very strict, and inelastic as those of the Medes and Persians. Few, if any, can meet them in the gate unashamed; they accomplish the difficult art of bridling all day long; there is nothing that anyone can do at which they will not bridle. They would make life a burden, but for one thing—no one takes any notice of them. In spite of this, they are quite happy.

The vocabulary of Mr. Lawson Wood's damsel is equal to anything; it is Oriental in its richness of simile and picturesque metaphor. Her disdain is a fine, sturdy thing, and men, women, and children become wilted and depressed before it. She will strike a cabman or a Covent Garden porter speechless with an anger that no words can relieve. One of her favourite remarks is "Nah then, none of that!" In the circles in which she moves she is highly respected.

On Bank Holidays and similar festivals she delights the eye with glorious apparel, and works havoc among the susceptible hearts of her male friends. On these days her disdain is seen at its best, generally at the expense of other ladies and *their* male friends.

Disdain may not do much harm if only indulged in now and again, as occasion requires. But we have Mr. W. Heath Robinson's authority for the statement that persistent or chronic disdain is bad for the mental powers. As the head swells and causes us to be more and more disdainful, so does our brain wither and shrink until it becomes so small that it rattles in the sconce, like a halfpenny in a money-box. The artist's sketch makes this

Impression by Mr. C. Harrison of a lady saying of another lady: "That shows what sort of a bringing up *she's* 'ad."

Young lady exclaiming: "Nah, then, none of that!" drawn by Mr. Lawson Wood.

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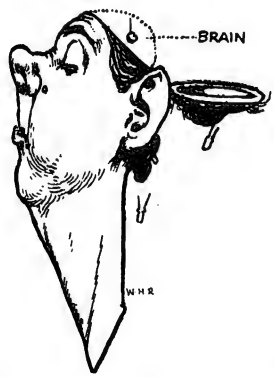
very apparent. We can see from the expression that the wearer views everyone with contempt; her brain has shrunk almost to a vanishing point. She is an awful example by which we shall do well to profit.

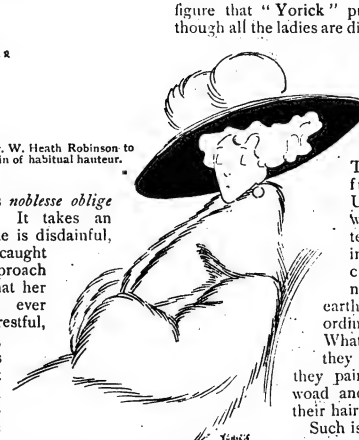
There are people whose naturally aristocratic natures, refined by careful training, absolutely preclude any outward and visible disdain. With them the emotion is, so to speak, taken internally. They may simply despise you, and never betray their feelings by so much as the quiver of an eyelash. Nervous people hate this peculiarity; they are never sure whether they are being disdained or not.

Of this type is the lady whom Mr. Jasper Weird has drawn. She is a patrician of the bluest blood. She has *noblesse oblige* written all over her. It takes an expert to say when she is disdainful, but Mr. Weird has caught her with the nearest approach to a look of disdain that her classic features have ever worn. And yet how restful, how soothing she is, even while she despises us. Her hat is the last word in hats; distinction radiates from her well-ordered hair; she has the grand manner.



Anatomical drawing by Mr. W. Heath Robinson to show the effect on the brain of habitual hauteur.

With a sigh of envy we pass to the fur-clad figure that "Yorick" puts before us. Although all the ladies are disdainful, the disdain of "Yorick's" lady is ineffable. Someone has said: "Poor pussy!" implying that her furs are not real. The creature! *Her* furs! Not *real!* Ugh! She shudders with dignified contempt at the bare imagination of such colossal impertinence. Where on earth do these extraordinary people live? What do they eat? Do they wear clothes, or do they paint themselves with woad and thrust feathers in their hair?



Expression of fur-clad lady on hearing someone say affectionately: "Pussy, pussy, *poor* pussy," portrayed by "Yorick."

Such is disdain; woman's greatest weapon, her crowning luxury, more to be desired than tea and much scandal.

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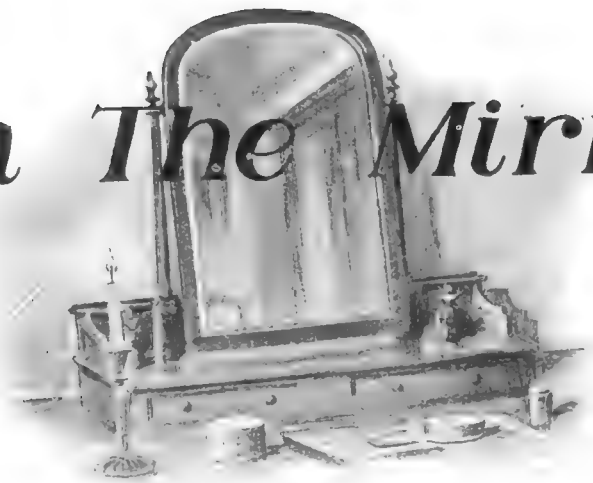
In The Mirror



The Story of a Woman's Strategy.

By C. Randolph-Lichfield.

It was past eleven.

Evidently Allen had lost the 10.7 down, or he would have reached home.

Ethel sighed as she reflected that, such being the case, he could not get back but by the last train, which would not get in before one. And she was all alone in the house, and the house stood all alone on the outskirts of the little country town. Of course. Allen was not to blame for her being alone, nor was he even aware of the fact, for it was not till long after he had started for town that the telegram for Alice had arrived. Still she felt she had a mild grievance against Allen, inasmuch as he knew that the maid might be called away at any moment, and that Sarah, the cook, would not return from her holiday till the end of the week.

She was inclined to nurse her sense of having a grievance against her husband, as it was an interesting novelty, and, stirring the ashes of the fire indolently, she tried to think what would be a suitable air and form of greeting with which to receive him when he woke her up on coming into the room. For she had no intention of sitting up till past one, being very tired—really half asleep already.

She came to the conclusion, however, that she was not so angry with him that she would wake up remembering she was angry; she knew she would awake, and, with an undignified yawn, inquire where he had been; and he would kiss her, and tell her something she would believe, whether it were true or false (being perfectly assured that it could not be false, because he had told her); and she would tell him all about Alice, and her inability to engage Mrs. Math, the charwoman, and that she had left him something to eat in the dining-room. So that before she realised her dignity she would have implied her condonation of his offence—if it were an offence to lose his train.

Such being the case, the best thing she could do was to bury the hatchet unused, and go to bed.

So she turned out the lamp in the cosy, warm little drawing-room, and, going out into the hall, lit her bedroom candle. The air of the hall struck her so chilly that she shivered, and as she picked up her candle a draught fluttered its flame towards her.

"Must be a window open somewhere," she murmured a little apprehensively, and shivered again, looking along the hallway towards the dark servants' quarters. She hesitated a moment, and then went forward.

To her surprise the back door itself was ajar. It surprised her, because it seemed incredible that she, who felt so keenly being alone in the house, should have omitted to see that it was properly bolted, while she knew the latch was faulty.

She bolted it now, glanced at the latch of the window to assure herself that that was not undone, and, being satisfied, went up to her bedroom, and began to undress.

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She was hanging up her skirt in the wardrobe, when she thought of the lamp she had left burning in the dining-room where the little table was spread for Allen. She locked the wardrobe door, and, throwing something around her bare shoulders, hastened down the dark stairs with no other thought in her mind than that of taking the precaution to remove the flimsy and inflammable shade from the lamp.

But on her way back a sudden nervousness excited her, and she ran breathlessly into the bedroom and shut the door, with that odd feeling that something was behind her. She was naturally timid, but very far from cowardly, and the moment she was back in the lighted room with the door shut, she recovered her self-possession.

Yawning, she crossed wearily over to the dressing-table, and began to let down her hair. It was very beautiful hair, of a rich brown colour, reaching past her waist. She ran her fingers through it, throwing it out in clouds about her; and as she watched it float and fall she saw a streak of light shine on or reflected in the mirror.

For a moment she thought it was a flash of lightning which had penetrated the venetian blinds, and she caught her breath and held it, waiting for the thunder. She waited five seconds, ten seconds, fifteen seconds, thirty seconds: but there was no roar of thunder, and she drew her breath again, but drew it with an effort, for she had realised in the pause that the light had not shone all over the surface of the mirror, but only down that side of it which now showed her the reflection of the mirror-panelled wardrobe.

Someone had shut the wardrobe door while she stood fingering her hair, someone had shut it from the inside, and was inside now!

Yet, ten minutes ago, she had hung her skirt up in the wardrobe, and locked the door.

She was seized with a voiceless fear, a fear which for the moment set her brain whirling, and held her heart still. But she did not move, or flag; motionless as stone, she stood staring at the reflection of her own dilating, frightened eyes.

By a supreme effort she threw off her mental confusion and recalled her courage. The fact that the man was hiding from her told her that she was safe for a time, for even if he did not fear her, he feared detection, which was much the same thing.

But why had that streak of light flashed in the mirror? Why had the door of the wardrobe been opened or shut? Was the man watching her?

With a trembling hand she took up a hairbrush, and began slowly to brush her hair. As long as the man thought she was unaware of his presence, he would probably remain where he was, but if she evinced the slightest sign that she knew he was there, then, fearing that she might effect his capture by some means, he might disclose himself, and, rather than risk detection, murder her perhaps.

Was he watching her? She had only to glance slightly to the left in the mirror to see whether the wardrobe door were shut or ajar; but the fear that she might see the door ajar, and a pair of glinting eyes watching her held her gaze firmly fixed on her white face. Sooner or later, however, she would have to look; sooner or later she would have to make up her mind what she was to do, and she could do nothing until she knew whether her movements were watched.

Swiftly she threw a glance over her left shoulder in the mirror. The door was shut, just as it had been when she left the room and returned to it. Had not some trick of the imagination, prompted by her consciousness of having left the back door open, and by that weak nervous attack as she ran upstairs from the dining-room, needlessly scared her?

She turned slightly on her hips and looked out of the corner of her eye at the wardrobe itself. Yes, it was shut, but not shut as she had left it. Undoubtedly someone was hiding within. It was not opened wide enough for the man to be watching her, but it was not so close shut as it would be if it were locked.

Locked!

Impulsively she laid down the hairbrush and moved a pace towards the wardrobe. She would lock him in. She took another step, a trembling hand stealing out in front of her. Then, with a little gasp for breath, she turned back to the dressing-table, and snatched up the brush again.

The key was not in the lock. The man had anticipated her, and taken it out. No doubt he had concealed himself hastily in the wardrobe as he heard her running up from the dining-room, and, realising that he would be trapped if she were to lock him in, had cautiously opened the door and abstracted the key while she stood fingering her hair. It was as he pulled the door to again, quickly, no doubt, that she had seen the streak of light.

She laid the brush down once more, and, beginning to plait her hair, looked again at the mirrored reflection of the wardrobe. The door now stood ajar, an inch ajar, and

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through the aperture she caught the glint of an eye watching her.

Instinctively she drew back out of sight, and moved down by the side of the bed to a small table. There she stood, with her back towards the wardrobe, and struggled to regain the courage which the sight of the watching eye had driven from her.

What was she going to do? she wondered, and moved the different things on the table, thinking that perhaps the man had opened the door wider, and was still watching her. What was she going to do? Probably if she attempted to step past the wardrobe and escape from the room, the man would guess she knew of his presence, and attack her before she could get out, for she remembered now that as she hurried back into the room, with the feeling of being pursued, she had turned the key in the lock half consciously.

She might climb across the bed, thus avoid passing the wardrobe, and reach the door; but it was likely that the man was watching all her movements in the mirror, and would divine her intention instantly. And if she could not escape, how could she keep him where he was until past one o'clock? It might be that even now he was beginning to suspect that she knew he was there, and was endeavouring to think how to trap him. What was she going to do?

Perhaps if she undressed, went to bed, and blew out the light, the man would steal away, grateful for the chance to escape detection. But to undress in the circumstances was impossible; to get to bed as she was would be ridiculous, and to lie abed in the dark, waiting for the man to steal away or murder her, would drive her mad.

She sat down weakly on the edge of the bed, and wriggled her feet out of her slippers. What could she do? How could she convince the man that she did not suspect his presence? How could she give him a chance to escape? What could she say to convey to him the fact that he would certainly be caught when her husband returned, which yet might not so alarm him that he would think to attack her to render her unable to describe him to the police? If she could do nothing but wait, wait, wait, for Allen to come home, how might she imply a reason for her procrastination in retiring, so that she would not seem to be momentarily expecting something, and the man should not suppose he was in imminent danger of being captured? Should she, could she, dare she give him a chance to escape?

Picking up a box of matches from the bedside table, she rose and crossed to the dressing-table, where the candle was set. She stood there for a moment, hesitating, summoning all her courage, then stooped as if to pick something from the floor, and knocked over the candlestick, extinguishing the light at the same moment.

"Bother!" she exclaimed, and the sound of her voice frightened her, for her ears were strained to catch any other sound than that.

Quickly she went to the bedside table, feigning to search there, and muttering to herself, so that the man should know that she was at the farther end of the room and that the way of escape was left open to him.

For as long as she could bear the awful suspense and darkness she stood at the table, groping over it, upsetting things upon it to create a noise which the man might think would drown the sounds of his movements. Then, trembling from head to foot, almost fainting, she struck a light and glanced over her shoulder, hoping to see the wardrobe and the door of the room open, fearing to see the man stealing towards her with an expression of murderous intent on his face. But the wardrobe door stood a little more ajar, that was all. The man was still watching and waiting.

The match fell from her nerveless fingers. She trod it out with her bare feet and struck another.

Clearly the man was more minded to rob than to escape.

Weakly she returned to the dressing-table, and stooping she lit the candle before she picked it up. Then as she raised it she glanced through her eyelashes at the wardrobe.

The man was watching her narrowly. She saw both his eyes this time and a portion of his brown beard.

He pulled the door to noiselessly as she straightened herself.

Her lips moved in silent prayer as she took her hair in both hands and again began to plait it.

Allen could not be back for more than an hour. How was she to bear this frightful suspense for that length of time? Besides, it was clear that the man was only waiting for her to retire and put out the light to rob her, not waiting to escape. And already he must be growing impatient of the delay she was creating.

Suddenly an idea struck her, and she looked along her shoulder towards the wardrobe. The door was shut, close shut.

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She . . . saw the brown-bearded man lying in the doorway, with Allen across him.

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Swiftly, with long strides, her feet scarcely touching the floor, she went to the head of the bed, and snatching up her night-dress, shook it open, and drew it on over her clothes. She fastened it about her with shaking hands as she went to the dressing-table once more.

Still the wardrobe remained close shut.

She took her rings off and laid them beside her brooch and watch on that corner of the table nearest to the wardrobe. Still the door remained close shut. She took off her bangles, clinking them together, looking out of the tail of her eye into the mirror, and as she saw the wardrobe door open slightly, she laid the bangles down carelessly beside her other jewels where the man could see them.

With a simulated yawn she picked up the candlestick and carried it to the bedside table, where she placed it. Then she threw open the bedclothes, and pausing a moment to call up all her courage again, she extinguished the light and got upon the bed.

But she did not get into the bed—on hands and knees she scrambled across it, and slid off on to her feet on the other side. Breathless from fear, with her heart beating audibly from excitement, her ears strained to catch the slightest sound, peering into the dimmest shadow, she crept towards the door, slowly at first, then, as her fear and excitement mastered her, swiftly.

Slowly, steadily she turned the key; cautiously, noiselessly she withdrew it and opened the door. She was excited up to the verge of screaming, but still had sufficient courage to restrain herself from rushing headlong from the room and slamming the door to after her; and she drew the door close.

Now that the feat was accomplished, her strength began to fail her rapidly, and she was seized with a violent fit of trembling. But something yet remained to be done before she might be safe.

She bent, and locating the exact position of the keyhole with a finger, inserted the key. At the same moment she felt the door-knob turn in her hand.

Uttering a piercing scream, she swung round and sped down the dark stairs, though not before the man had dashed out of the room after her. She felt his hand brush her shoulder as he reached out blindly to seize her; and she screamed again when he stumbled from the unseen top stair and clutched the hand-rail to save himself from falling.

The next instant she flung herself into the lighted dining-room, right into the arms of Allen, who had started from the supper-table and towards the door as he heard her screams.

"Allen!" she gasped, "a robber!—in my room!"

"A what?" he cried, and putting her aside, strode out into the hall.

She saw him draw back and shield his head with an arm, then dash forward, and half fainting she dropped into a chair. She heard a heavy crash, and starting up again, saw the brown-bearded man lying in the doorway, with Allen across him.

"My serviette!" panted Allen, breathless from the fall, pinning the man down by the arms. "The serviette!—bind his ankles while I hold him! Quickly!—he's stronger than he looks. It's Londall—the murderer who escaped from the asylum this morning. I read of his escape this evening. Oh!—he's stunned."

He rose hesitatingly, and, snatching the serviette from his wife's hands, quickly bound the unconscious man's ankles.

"I missed the 10.7," he said, as he worked, "so I took the through train on to Shepperworth and doubled back by a local. Thank God I did. It's undoubtedly Londall. Give me something—anything—to tie his wrists; then I can leave him and summon the police. Don't cry, dear—you're all right now!"

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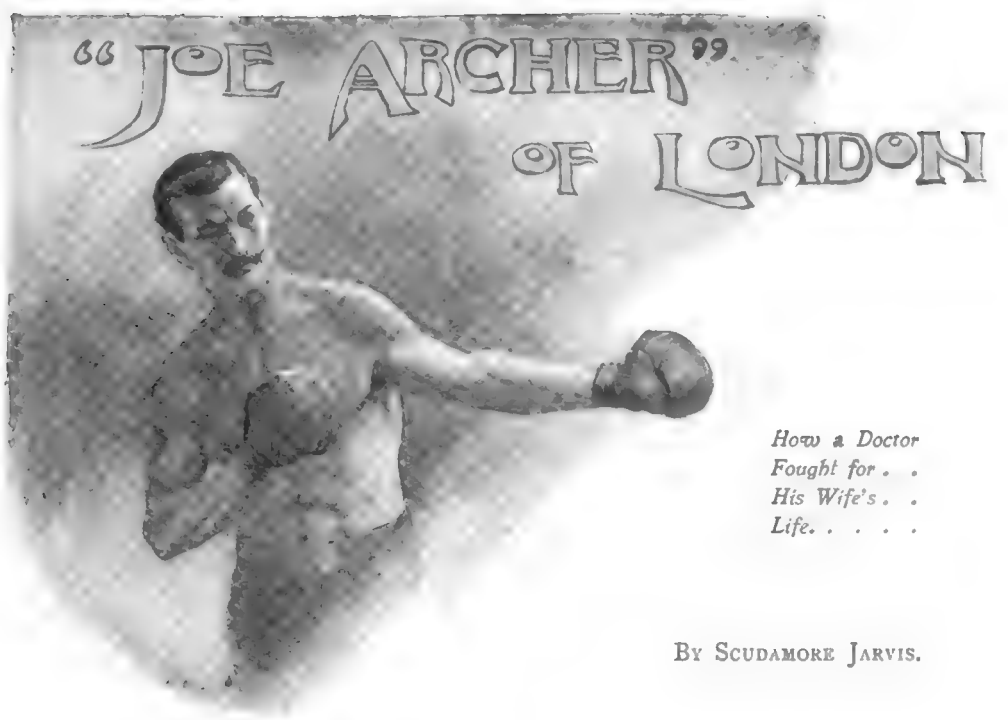

How a Doctor Fought for . . His Wife's . . Life. . . . . .

By Scudamore Jarvis.

"*Experientia docet,*" but unfortunately Dame Experience's methods of instruction are somewhat crude, to say the least of it. Instead of gently chiding her pupil, and showing him the error of his ways with a mild rebuke, she sails in with both hands swinging, and knocks her man out with a series of terrific blows, never once allowing him a moment's breathing space to pull himself together.

Jimmy Brewster found this to his cost when, having passed as a medico at the age of twenty-three, he married a young and inexperienced girl, and attempted to build up a practice in a thriving seaport town. There were already many doctors in the place, but Jimmy, with the confidence of youth, set to work—or rather prepared for it—in real earnest. But, beyond an odd accident or two, no patients came his way, and gradually his small nest-egg, set aside to tide him over the first year till accounts came in, began to dwindle away. Misfortunes, we are told, never come singly, and just when things were looking as black as they possibly could, Mrs. Brewster fell ill with pneumonia, and after going to the edge of the world and looking over it, came back to life a mere shadow of her former self.

As frequently happens after an illness where the lungs are affected, consumption found a hold, and Jimmy learnt one day, to his horror, that unless his wife at once proceeded to the south of France for some months, the disease would gain complete mastery, and all chance of checking it would be gone. On the other hand, if steps to cure it were taken at once, there was every prospect of her regaining her health. Had a trip to the moon been suggested, it could not have been more utterly beyond Jimmy's reach. Relatives to whom he could apply for funds he had none, and the same applied to his wife, while his bank balance was reduced to £5, with tradesmen's bills in all quarters for six times that amount.

"Don't worry, Jimmy dear," said plucky little Mrs. Brewster, with a wan smile. "I'm sure that Dr. Walker is an old faddist, and that I shall soon be as well as ever without the silly trip."

Jimmy stood staring into the fire with a gloomy expression on his face. He worshipped his cheery little wife, and would have died gladly twenty times over to save her a moment's pain, and yet he was doomed to stand by and see her gradually fade away before his eyes for the sake of a paltry £100.

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In vain he racked his brains for some way to raise the necessary cash, but he could arrive at no solution of the difficulty, and in despair he walked out of the house to be alone with his misery by the sea.

"Hullo, Brewster," said a voice at his side, as he completed his fifth turn on the front, "who would have expected to see you here!"

Brewster turned round, and next moment was shaking hands with Charlie Stewart, who had walked the hospitals with him, and was now a naval surgeon.

"I've got a practice here," he explained; "at least, I've just started one. I'm a Benedict, you know."

"Great man!" exclaimed Stewart, "and how's Mrs. Brewster? I must do myself the honour of calling on her one day."

"I'm sorry, old man," replied Jimmy sadly, "but she's too ill to see anyone. Just getting over pneumonia, you know."

"By Jove, I'm sorry to hear that. I hope she'll soon be all right again. Must send her away for a change—absolutely necessary after a bad illness. By the way, are you doing anything to-morrow week? The Fleet's having a boxing competition."

"I'm afraid I couldn't leave my wife," returned Brewster, the careless conversation of the other jarring on his nerves.

"Oh, you ought to come. There'll be several good shows in the light and middle weights between our fellows and the Tommies from the regiment stationed here. The *pièce de résistance*, however, will be provided by our champion, Stoker Stephens, who won the Army and Navy Heavy Weights. There's a purse of £200 offered, but I'm afraid it'll be no go, as there's not much chance of anyone coming forward to take a slogging from Stephens at catch weights. Must you be off? Well, good-night, old chap; come aboard and see me one afternoon."

Full of care, Brewster wended his way slowly homewards, still grappling with the problem of raising funds, but, against his will, Stewart's heedless remarks constantly ran through his brain. "A purse of £200 to anyone who could beat Stoker Stephens." Suddenly he stopped dead in his tracks, and ran the fingers of his left hand up his right arm to his biceps.

"Why shouldn't I?" he said fiercely through his teeth. "I can box as well as most amateurs. I'm as strong as a horse, and, as a student, I was always ready to scrap with any London bully who was looking for trouble. £200 would save Maisie's life—it's the only possible way, and, by Heaven! I'll do it. I'll fight Stoker Stephens, and I'll beat him."

On arriving at the house he found his wife had already retired to bed, and, going to his dressing-room, he stripped to the waist, and carefully took stock of himself in the glass.

"H'm," he muttered, as he lifted a brawny arm and watched the hard muscle slowly rise and distend the skin until the veins stood out in knots, "a little surplus fat, but I'll soon work that off. Now for a spell of dumb-bells."

For a quarter of an hour he worked hard, and then, laying the bells down, he had a bout with the punch ball till interrupted by a weak voice from the next room:

"Whatever are you doing, Jimmy? I can hear you panting and blowing—why don't you come to bed?"

"Just coming, dear. I was having a little exercise with the dumb-bells. Been feeling a bit sluggish lately. Mustn't let the little woman know," he added under his breath, as he put the punch ball away. "She'd die of fright at the mere mention of a fight."

For the next three days Jimmy trained assiduously, and was delighted to see the surplus fat disappear from his body, leaving him as fine a specimen of muscular manhood as one could wish to see. His next move was to frequent a certain bar-parlour where he became acquainted with several sergeants of the local regiment, and by confining his conversation to boxing he was lucky enough one day to meet the redoubtable Corporal Buyers, who had met Stoker Stephens in the Army and Navy finals.

"Am I going to meet him again, sir?" he said, as he grinned over the top of a pint pot; "not on your life. I know when I've met my match, and I'd rather hold Stephens' sponge at the ring side than meet his fist inside the ropes. I met it several times at Aldershot, and I don't mind admitting that I had enough."

"Do you think anyone else will take him on?" inquired Jimmy anxiously.

"No fear of that, sir," was the reply. "The stoker's far too well known round these parts for anyone to be fool enough to stand up to him."

"Supposing I was to tell you that I'm going to?" said Jimmy quietly.

For a moment the corporal stared in astonishment with his mouth open.

"I should either say you was a liar, sir, or else mad."

"Perhaps I'm mad, but I'm not a liar, for I certainly mean to fight the stoker."

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The corporal got up, felt Jimmy's biceps, struck him heavily on the chest, and then shook him by the hand.

"Good on you, sir. You've got pluck, and you've got beef, but you won't win—you can't."

"Would you like to train me?"

"Would I!—I'd jump at it, sir. Come up to the gym. to-night and we'll have the mittens on and see what you can do."

Half-an-hour later the corporal remarked, as he unlaced his gloves:

"With three months' training, sir, I think you could lick me, but even then you'd be streets away from beating Stephens. You've a lovely left, a fair guard, and can take your punishment like a man, but you're slow—terrible slow, and at your present form the stoker, with his ring-craft, will knock you out in the first round. I'll get a couple of light weights in to-morrow and try to wake you up a bit. Now you hurry home and have a hot bath afore you catch a chill, and"—as he raised his forefinger—"not a single pipe or cigarette, mind you, and no whisky; a glass of beer twice a day is all you'll have."

"I'd rather hold Stephens' sponge at the ring side than meet his fist inside the ropes."

Jimmy went back to bed that night not altogether satisfied with the result of the trial. He had known before, however, that slowness was his chief fault, and resolved to do his utmost to remedy that failing, but he felt that the issue of the fight lay not so much with his skill as a boxer—he was quite aware that he would never equal the stoker in that respect—but rather in his ability to take a terrific amount of punishment, and to hit as hard at the conclusion of the tenth round as at the beginning of the first.

The next day he sent in his challenge to Stoker Stephens as "Joe Archer," of London, and speculation was rife throughout boxing circles as to who this mysterious and daring person could be, but Corporal Buyers was very close about the matter, and allowed no hint as to the identity of his man to escape. Jimmy then proceeded diligently with his training and had several spells with light weights, who taught him the value of quick movements and lightning blows.

At last the day of the fight dawned. Jimmy was as fit as a week's hard training could make him, and was probably in as good condition as the stoker, who, being unable to find out anything to the credit of his opponent, was taking matters easily in anticipation of a walk-over. Corporal Buyers, although by no means confident of success, admitted that his man had greatly improved, but feared that he would be unable to withstand his antagonist's lightning blows.

Mrs. Brewster, growing thinner and paler

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every day, was becoming greatly mystified by her husband's conduct. His depression had suddenly vanished, and in place of it he wore an expression of forced gaiety under which his wife detected a nervous anxiety, which made her vaguely uneasy as to the cause.

The fight was due to take place at eight o'clock that night, and Jimmy partook of an early dinner at half-past six, at which he ate sparingly.

"What is the matter with you, Jimmy?" asked Mrs. Brewster. "You've been *so* strange lately."

"Have I, dear?" replied Jimmy absent-mindedly.

"Yes," said his wife decidedly, "and to-night your manner is more peculiar than ever. Where are you going?" as he rose from the table.

"Oh, if you don't mind I'm just going round to see Stewart, the naval surgeon I was speaking about."

For some seconds Mrs. Brewster watched her husband steadily, knowing, with her woman's intuition, that he was telling a lie for the first time during their married life.

"You won't be late, will you, dear?" she said slowly, "and perhaps you will tell me what is on your mind when you come back."

II.

The drill hall at Bincome was packed to overflowing, and a sea of faces, half hidden in a cloud of tobacco smoke, turned towards a ring raised in the centre of the building as a man in evening dress stepped forward.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the contest between Stoker Stephens, of H.M.S. *Sussex*, and Joe Archer of London, will now take place. There will be ten rounds of two minutes each. I will now introduce the men. Stoker Stephens"—and he pointed to a thick-set, brawny man who entered the ring at that moment—"the winner of the Army and Navy Heavy Weights, and Joe Archer of London," and he turned to Jimmy, as he vaulted lightly over the ropes. "Stoker Stephens turns the scale at 11st. 10lbs., and Joe Archer at 12st. 5lbs. Seconds out of the ring."

Whispering a few final instructions, Corporal Buyers stepped through the ropes, and Jimmy walked to the centre of the ring and shook hands with his opponent. He was about to meet one of the finest pugilists of the day, not for the honour and glory of victory, but to save the life of his wife—the heaviest stake, in his opinion, a man could fight for; and the stoker, who at once sized his antagonist up as an amateur, was rather uneasy about the dogged determination in his face. Jimmy had the pull over his man in height and reach, but the terrific chest measurement and biceps of the stoker amply counterbalanced these slight advantages.

In silence the fight started. Stephens, feinting with his left, led lightly on Jimmy's body, and received in exchange a hard drive in the face. A clinch followed, and in the break away Brewster landed heavily on his opponent's ear, following it up with a tremendous punch straight from the shoulder which the stoker, ducking quickly, took on the top of his bullet head, where it glanced off like a raindrop. The rest of the round consisted of light give and take blows and clinches, in which neither scored an advantage, and Jimmy returned to his corner by no means displeased with himself.

"Not bad," admitted the corporal, "but the stoker ain't started yet. Wait till he does."

He started the next round, and sent Jimmy staggering to the ropes with a volley of lightning blows, every one landing with terrific force. In vain Brewster attempted to follow his second's instructions to get in close and clinch when things became too warm. His wily opponent knew more of the game than he did, and, keeping him at arm's length, slogged him unmercifully. Towards the close of the round, Jimmy managed to get in a heavy body blow which staggered the stoker for an instant; but in endeavouring to follow up his advantage, Brewster received a jab on the ear that knocked him silly, the call of time only saving him from further punishment.

The next four rounds were practically a repetition of the second, and Jimmy, when he stepped out into the ring for the seventh, was a pitiable spectacle; his nose was bleeding, his left eye nearly closed, his lips swollen to enormous size, while his right ear was one discoloured mass. The stoker's face, on the other hand, was practically untouched, but one or two ominous dark spots on his ribs showed that he had not had things altogether his own way.

He ran towards Jimmy on the call of time with a set expression on his face, resolved to put out his opponent without further waste of time. Already he had dealt out sufficient punishment to finish any ordinary man, but this dogged amateur refused to admit that he

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was beaten, and continued to turn up every round with a set smile on his face, which exasperated the stoker, who, not being in perfect training, was beginning to feel the strain.

Driving his left hard on to Jimmy's body, he swung viciously with his right for the point, but, Brewster ducking suddenly, he stumbled across the ring with the weight of his blow, and Jimmy, following him, sent him to the ground with a heavy drive over the heart. In half-a-second, however, the stoker was up again, and rushed at his opponent like a maddened bull. Jimmy was quite unable to withstand the blows that were rained on him, and was forced to the ropes, where the stoker exacted a terrible vengeance. Left and right he drove his fists home, every one seemingly heavy enough to fell an ox, while Jimmy, with his hands before his face, feebly essayed to parry them.

Down crashed the stoker to the ground.

Thud, thud, thud, the blows smashed in, and with each thud the spectators gasped in amazement, wondering how any living man could possibly stand up to them. At last Brewster began to weaken, and as his head drooped forward he received a terrific smash on the point of the jaw and dropped to the floor like a log.

"One, two, three, four, five," counted the referee, "six, seven, eight," and the spectators rose in their seats to see if there were any prospect of the fallen man rising before he was counted out, but Jimmy did not stir a limb.

Suddenly a mighty shout arose. The call of time had saved the situation, and, provided that his second could pull him round sufficiently, Jimmy was still entitled to continue the fight.

Corporal Buyers ran across the ring, and picking up the limp body, carried it to the corner, where he proceeded to instil life with the rough but effective methods employed at the ring side, till Jimmy, with a slight shudder, opened his eyes and smiled faintly.

"Are you coming up again, sir?" asked the corporal.

"Of course," said Jimmy weakly, "and I'm going to hit him this time. I'm tired of trying to keep away from the stoker."

"Mind he don't hit you," replied the corporal, as he got through the ropes. "Don't take any chances."

The stoker was evidently surprised to see his opponent come up again, and rushed in to finish the fight off-hand, but some wonderful change had come over Jimmy. The awful prospect of Maisie slowly fading out of his life came to him with renewed force, and he felt that he could meet a giant without fear. Setting his teeth, he sprang at the stoker, and drove his left and right hard into the grinning, confident face.

Encouraged by his success, he dashed in,

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and with a series of short-arm punches drove his amazed antagonist to the ropes, amid the delighted yells of the crowd. Backwards and forwards the men strove, Stephens furiously trying to knock his man out, and Jimmy, regardless of punishment, hitting left and right at any portion of his opponent's face or body that presented itself.

The spectators, utterly unable to shout from excitement, rose in their seats and watched the whirling mass of arms with bated breath. Suddenly the stoker, seeing an opening, drove his right over Jimmy's heart; then, dashing in, he sent him to the floor with an upper-cut. Thinking the fight was over, he was about to step back, when Jimmy bounded to his feet and sprang at him like a tiger. The stoker received the first blow above the right eye, and a stream of blood showed the force with which it was dealt.

Blinded for the moment, he hit wildly, and got a smash on the jaw that staggered him. With the blood surging in his brain, and exulting in his new-found strength, Jimmy slogged left and right, springing off the ground to get more weight into his punches, and the stoker, under the hail of blows, began to weaken. His lack of training, too, began to find him out, and, his breath coming in gasps, he was forced backwards on to the ropes.

His reputation was at stake, however, and he fought fiercely and doggedly; but his opponent was battling for all he held dear in life, and the thought lent strength to his blows. Crash! and Jimmy's fist landed on Stephens' mouth, driving his head back, and leaving his neck exposed, which gave Brewster the chance he was looking for. Putting all his weight into the blow, he drove hard at the other's throat. With a gasp the sailor staggered forward and received a fearful right swing on the ear. Like a falling oak he swayed to and fro, and then Jimmy, stepping back and selecting his spot with accuracy, swung his right with all his strength and found the point. Down crashed the stoker to the ground, and the fight was over.

* * * * *

Six months later, when Dr. and Mrs. Brewster, the latter completely restored to health, returned to Bincome, they found that the identity of the mysterious "Joe Archer" had leaked out, and, judging from the huge practice that immediately sprang up, it would appear that notoriety is just as effective an advertisement for the medical profession as for any other.

LOVE LAUGHS AT LOCKSMITHS.

I thought how easy it would be
To lock my heart, and keep the key,
And suffer no intrusion;
But answer, "not at home," to all
Such visitors as came to call—
Ridiculous delusion!

For, though I lived, with some success,
Awhile in single wretchedness,
Allowing none to enter,
One came a little time ago,
Who picked the lock (how, I don't know)
Before I could prevent her.

And, still, although no rent she pays,
Within that heart of mine she stays,
To my extreme amazement;
And, scorning notices to quit,
Now occupies the whole of it
From garret to the basement.

Ada Leoncra Harris.

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The Perfect Woman

How to Attain Health, Beauty, and a Good Figure.

By Maude Odell.

How to Stand.

How Not to Stand.

Miss Maude Odell here discusses a subject of interest to every woman. She does so with authority. An acknowledged beauty, winner of a gold medal for the place of honour as the most perfectly developed of women, she confesses that her strength and her beauty have resulted from exercise. On the stage, in her well-known presentment of "Galatea," a living statue, the perfection of her figure won universal admiration. From many systems of training, she has designed one of extreme simplicity which, she claims, will work miracles in perfecting the figure and the health of all who put it to the test.

As a true daughter of Eve, I may tell you at once that I would not concern myself with physical culture for any other than a truly womanly reason—good looks.

If I thought that physical exercise would give me unsightly muscles or big hands and feet—if I merely thought it might be good for health in a general way—if I imagined for a moment that it would prevent me from wearing clothes properly—I would not trouble myself about it—or you. But I believe proper physical exercise to be the only certain means of attaining good complexion, good looks, a good figure, good carriage, beautiful neck, shoulders and arms, to say nothing of a supple waist and a trim ankle—and that is why I am never tired of preaching and practising my gospel of ten minutes' physical culture every morning before the bath.

(1) (2)

Exercise to Produce a Graceful Neck.—Stand upright, hold the body erect and still, gently throw back the head as far as it will go comfortably (illustration 1), then bring it slowly down until the chin almost touches the chest. (2) Repeat the movement twenty-five times during one minute.

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Not that I expect to make anything out of it for myself or my friends—but good looks. I do not take pupils, or instruct through the post, you know, or anything like that.

Exercise has done everything for me, not only in the

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EXERCISE FOR DEVELOPING THE CHEST.—(1) Stand erect, extend the arms horizontally to full length, hands together—

way of grace and form, but in preventing me from knowing the common ills, indigestion, headache, or nerves, in making me always as hungry as a hunter when I sit down to meals, and in enabling me to put on my clothes in such a way as to make my tailor exclaim the other day: "If all my clients were like you, Miss Odell, I should be the most famous tailor in the world."

Before you consider my plan, just think a minute what women do in these days to attain good looks. They wear corsets of fashionable shapes, regardless of their natural requirements. These corsets prevent proper breathing, and constrict the digestive organs; moreover, they keep the upper part of the body rigid, and prevent any grace of movement when walking. As a result, they cause bad complexions and red noses.

Then, women wear high heels. Louis heels, incurved, which do not support the heel, but come under the instep, or nearly so, give no proper support, cramp the toes unnaturally (causing nobbles on the feet, and throwing the big toe joint all out of place), and affect the spine. In themselves, these heels are dangerous, they are very liable to catch in tram-lines, or in the skirt when walking, or on the step of a cab when alighting therefrom. Heels should never be higher than one and a quarter inches, if health is to be considered, and good carriage.

Then, smart women have little opportunity for taking real exercise. Perhaps they ride in the park if in town, or play croquet or tennis when in the country; but this has little or no effect on health or strength.

They spend much time, thought, and money on acquiring false hair and false complexions. No trouble is too much for the sake of a fine complexion; any amount of massage is endured, and bottles of lotion are cheerfully rubbed into the skin; the usual result being that the complexion cannot be trusted out on a windy day unless covered by at least two veils.

Ten minutes of simple exercise before the bath in the morning would make life really worth living to thousands of women who now find it an intense bore.

The exercises I advocate are of the simplest possible kind. They require no paraphernalia. I have chosen them from thousands because of their special relation to beauty, each having its object in contributing to the physically perfect figure. They begin with the neck and end with the ankles; they are not too arduous or tiring, and the whole series may be run through within ten minutes. They should all be carried out in the regulation drill position: heels together, chest thrown out, shoulders back—and deep and regular breathing should be their accompaniment.

Every woman covets a good neck—every woman may attain one, round and long, easy

(2) Then, breathing deeply through the nose, slowly swing back the stiff and straightened arms as far as they will go in a sweeping three-quarters of a circle. Repeat the movement thirty times during one minute.

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EXERCISE FOR DEVELOPING THE WRISTS AND FOREARMS.—(1) Clench the hands tightly and extend the arms sideways horizontally to their full length, bracing the muscles, the backs of the hands to be uppermost. Then sharply bend the hands downwards so that the backs of the hands are as nearly as possible at right angles to the wrists.—

and graceful. This is the secret: Stand upright, hold the body erect and still, gently throw back the head as far as it will go comfortably, then bring it slowly down until the chin almost touches the chest; and repeat the movement about twenty-five times during, say, one minute.

That is all.

Next comes an exercise for opening the chest, and developing and perfecting the shape of that upper portion of the chest displayed by evening dress; for loosening the shoulder-blades, and bringing to being those pretty shadowy dimples on the top of the back. It is this:

Stand erect, extend the arms horizontally to full length, hands together, then, breathing deeply through the nose, slowly swing back the stiff and straightened arms as far as they will go, in a sweeping three-quarters of a circle, described on a horizontal plane. Repeat this motion thirty times during one minute.

In this, as in all the exercises, care must be taken to keep the mind fixed on what is being done; the muscles must be braced firmly, and full energy put into the work.

We have not yet done with the arms. I have a wonderfully fine exercise for improving the shape of the forearms, and for making the wrists shapely and thin. Many women are proud of their fat and baby-like wrists; but a look of strength, a suspicion of boniness about a wrist, is no bad thing. This exercise improves also the appearance of the elbows; but the main thing is the wonderful way in which it gives a beautiful shape to the forearm. Whether we display bare arms, or, according to the latest mode, wear skin-tight sleeves, a well-shaped forearm is in these days a matter of essential importance.

Clench the hands tightly, and extend the arms sideways horizontally to their full length, bracing the muscles, the backs of the hands to be uppermost and flat. Then sharply bend the hands downwards, so that the backs of the hands are, as nearly as possible, at right angles to the wrists. Now sharply raise the clenched hands, bringing the backs of the hands again as nearly as possible at right

(2) Now sharply raise the clenched hands, bringing the backs of the hands again as nearly as possible at right angles to the wrists, but this time with the knuckles up. Repeat this exercise sharply twenty times.

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angles to the wrists, but this time with knuckles up. Repeat this exercise sharply twenty times.

The next exercise is expressly designed for bust development, and is very simple.

Extend the arm, with closed hands, at full length, in a line with the shoulder, other hand on hip — bring the arm smartly down to the front of the body, so that the upper part of the arm presses firmly against the upper part of the body. Do this eighteen times with each arm.

EXERCISE TO DEVELOP THE BUST.—(1) Extend the arm, with clenched hand, at full length in a line with the shoulder, other hand on hip.

Fifty exercises might be recommended with the same object in view—figure improvement; but the simple one described will be found wonderfully effective, and has improved the looks of many people who have tried it beyond all recognition. For waist improvement, too, there are scores of exercises. The familiar old one of standing upright, hands together above the head, then of bending the body, with knees stiff, until the finger-tips touch the toes, is very fine practice, if rather violent. Here is an easier one, better calculated to make the waist shapely, long, flexible, and graceful, and specially designed to round the ribs, and to produce neat hips. It is an exercise which will make the too fat reasonably thin, and make the too thin reasonably plump by developing muscles.

Stand erect, arms at full length at the sides, hands tightly clenched. Then bend the body sideways, raising one hand so as to bring the knuckles to the armpit, and lowering the other as far as possible. Now bend the other way, reversing the hand movements — and continue the exercise rhythmically thirty times.

(2) Bring arm smartly down to the front of the body so that the upper part of the arm presses firmly on the upper part of the body. Do this eighteen times with either arm.

The next performance is to exercise abdominal muscles—to produce the flat front effect so fashionable to-day, and to strengthen the muscles which lie over the digestive organs. This is it:

Lie extended flat on the back on the floor, the arms above the head. Rise to a sitting position, keeping the heels together and on the ground, arms in the air. Extend the arms — the head between them — and touch the toes with the tips of the fingers; then return to the original position, and continue the exercise twenty times.

And now a little particular attention must be paid to legs and ankles. There is an old military exercise for the legs that can hardly be improved upon, though it is rather much for delicate people.

With hands on hips, stand on the toes, then slowly lower the body, keeping it erect and straight, until sitting on the heels; slowly rise, and repeat as often as may be.

I like to make an end of the exercises by *skipping a hundred times*, which is the finest thing in the world for legs and ankles, for raising the circulation, and inducing perspiration.

The last skip should land you in a bath. Personally, I take it cold, but that is a matter of constitution.

The whole series of exercises should be run through in less than ten minutes. Done regularly, they will go far to insure not only a good complexion, a shapely figure, and perfect

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EXERCISE TO PRODUCE A FLEXIBLE WAIST.—Stand erect, arms at full length at the sides, hands tightly clenched. Then bend the body sideways, raising one arm so as to bring the knuckles to the armpit, and lower the other as far as possible. Now bend the other way, reversing the hand movements, and repeat the exercise thirty times.

health, but a new joy in the spending of every day.

Finally, let me emphasise the fact that exercise is the only certain road for attaining a perfect appearance—it *forces* a good complexion, simply because a good complexion depends upon a good circulation, and a good circulation depends upon exercise. A too thorough devotion to one exercise or one game is bad, for this means over-development of certain muscles, and a good figure must be of equal and even development. If it is noticed that an exercise is developing, say, an arm more quickly than another is developing the chest, the arm exercise should

The wrist is not as supple and flexible as it should be unless it can be bent with ease as shown in this illustration without effort or strain on the muscles.

be decreased, to avoid ill-proportioned development.

If women would give to exercise a hundredth part of the attention given to their toilet, their efforts would be rewarded, and generously rewarded, by Nature.

The perfect arm. All its symmetry and strength are entirely due to perseverance in the exercises described in this article.

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THE CONQUERING OF KETTERHAM

How Its Aristocracy Climbed Down.

By E. Newton Bungey.

"I don't advise you to go to Ketterham, Mr. Hilsdon," said Mr. Henty, of Henty & Walker, solicitors. "The well-to-do inhabitants are few and very cliquey. I am told that it is just about as hard for an outsider to get in the best set at Ketterham as it is for—er—for a costermonger to get into the House of Lords."

"Don't you worry, Mr. 'Enty. Money'll take you everywhere an' do anythink," replied Mr. Hilsdon.

The last speaker was a man of about fifty years of age. His somewhat corpulent frame was surmounted by a rubicund, cheerful countenance, from which two grey eyes looked you squarely in the face. Mr. Hilsdon was a big man, there was something attractive in his bearing; he was absolutely above board, but, alas! he was somewhat inclined to be vulgar.

His daughters secretly bewailed this fact, and strove to improve Mr. Hilsdon, but their genial parent saw no harm in his manners. They were most of them old and tried comrades, whom he had known all his life.

Mr. Henty, his solicitor, knew his client's social failings, and it was them he had in mind when he advised Mr. Hilsdon not to attempt to storm the aristocratic defences of Ketterham.

"You wait till the nobs see my gals," Mr. Hilsdon said, with a knowing wink. "They'll be ready enough to pal up to old Tom 'Ilsdon then, you mark my words."

Mr. Henty thought of the Misses Hilsdon. They were young and pretty, well educated, and refined. There was not the slightest trace of low breeding in either Molly or Ethel. In fact, they seemed to be throwbacks in the line of Hilsdons, modern representatives of some blue-blooded ancestors of days gone by.

No doubt, thought Mr. Henty, the young men of Ketterham will be only too anxious to know the charming Misses Hilsdon. But they will do it on the sly; it will not take Mr. Hilsdon into the society he desires.

The solicitor pictured Sir William Markham, the leader of Ketterham society, when he learnt that Hilsdon, of Hilsdon's sausages and pork pies, was going to take Denham Hall.

"He'll drive the poor old man out of the neighbourhood," he thought.

"Well, me mind's made up," said Mr. Hilsdon. "I'm goin' to take this Den'am 'All."

The Hilsdons' new home was a magnificent old Tudor pile standing in extensive grounds. Painters and decorators took it in hand, Warings furnished it from top to bottom, its large stables were well stocked, and a staff of servants engaged. Then Mr. Hilsdon, his sister, and his two daughters, took up their residence.

When they had been at Denham Hall about a week, the Rector paid a duty call He was received with open arms, metaphorically speaking, and was presented with a substantial cheque for his church.

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"The two girls would have been an acquisition," he murmured as he drove away, "but the father and aunt are impossible. I am afraid Sir William was right, although he was unnecessarily bitter."

The reverend gentleman was thinking of the scene which took place when Sir William heard who the new tenants of Denham Hall were.

"By the Lord Harry!" he had cried, smiting a table with his fist, his face apoplectic, "what are we coming to? For hundreds of years Denham Hall has sheltered a Fitzwalter, and now a porkbutcher lives in it."

"Money!" he roared, when someone remarked that Mr. Hilsdon was a millionaire. "What's money beside blood? I suppose the fellow thinks to be one of us because he lives at the Hall, but, by the Lord Harry! he'll find out his mistake. He won't stay long in Ketterham unless the tradespeople take him up."

The fiery old aristocrat then stalked out to play golf, his ruling passion, and increased his wrath by breaking his favourite driver.

The first appearance of the Hilsdons at church caused somewhat of a sensation. Sir William Markham glared viciously at the chancel, disdaining to look at the interlopers, but he was the only one who did not examine the Hilsdons. Even the ladies could find no fault with, whilst undoubtedly they envied, the perfectly-gowned Misses Hilsdon, and the male sex were lost in admiration.

"By jingo!" whispered Jim Markham, the baronet's eldest son. "Aren't they rippers?"

"Thoroughbreds, every inch of 'em," replied his brother Cyril, whose inclinations tended towards the stables.

"What a pity their father has been a porkbutcher," was the remark made by nearly every member of the Ketterham smart set.

The lavishly-equipped electric-car that took the Hilsdons back to the Hall was the envy of the entire congregation. But Mr. Hilsdon spoilt the effect by exclaiming in a loud voice:

"'Ome, 'Enery!"

The Misses Thackeray, who had hitherto enjoyed the reputation of being the best-dressed ladies in Ketterham, were decidedly chagrined, for they knew that neither of them could dress like Molly or Ethel.

"Money can do anything," remarked the elder Miss Thackeray resentfully.

Her sister did not reply, but she thought that there was something in the air and deportment of the Misses Hilsdon that money could not buy.

"People don't seem sorter fallin' over themselves to get to know us, Bella, do they?" asked Mr. Hilsdon of his sister.

"No, Tom, I told you how it would be. I——"

"Oh, put a stopper on it, Bella. Ain't that just like a woman—I told you so," growled Mr. Hilsdon. "'Ang it!" he added angrily, "I'll bring 'em to 'eel."

But another week passed by, and the Hilsdons might have been living in Jericho for all the notice the "best people" took of them.

The tradespeople, on the other hand, were most obsequious, and humbled themselves in the dust before the Hilsdons.

"That's only nat'ral. They're goin' to make money out of us," growled Mr. Hilsdon. "But I see a way, I think."

He ordered his electric brougham, and was driven to "Eastdale," the residence of Mr. Godfrey Langton, one of the leaders of Ketterham society.

"Mr. Langton wishes to know your business—sir," said the butler, bringing out the last word with an effort.

Mr. Hilsdon kept down his rising choler with difficulty. He had been kept waiting ten minutes for this.

"He's the secretary o' the tennis club; that's what I want to see 'im about," he said.

The butler disappeared, and after another ten minutes had elapsed he returned.

"Mr. Langton will see you," he said. "This way, please."

"Condescendin', aint 'e?" muttered Mr. Hilsdon, as he followed the butler into a room.

Presently Mr. Langton appeared, and bowed very stiffly.

"You wish to see me?" he said. "Let me see, Mr.—er——"

"Oh don't Mr.—er—like that," growled Mr. Hilsdon, his temper rapidly going. "You know my name well enough; it's on most of the 'oardin's."

"I do not pass my time in reading the advertisements on hoardings," replied Mr. Langton frigidly.

"Praps not, but I didn't come 'ere to talk about advertisements," remarked Mr. Hilsdon in calmer tones. "I want my girls to become members of the Ketter'am Lawn Tennis Club. I'll give you a 'andsome entrance fee."

"I will put their application forward," said Mr. Langton suavely, "I can do no more."

"You mean they won't get in. Why not? 'Cos I'm 'Ilsdon, the Pork Pie King?"

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Mr. Langton shuddered and shrugged his shoulders. "One vote against any applicant is sufficient. That is the club rule," he replied, opening the door.

Mr. Hilsdon kept himself in hand by a strong effort, but inwardly he was fuming. To make a long story short, however, let it be stated that the applications were refused, as also were applications for membership of the golf club. No one called on the Hilsdons; Ketterham let it be seen very plainly that the society of the newcomers was not desired.

But one afternoon Mr. Hilsdon was confronted with the spectacle of his daughters in animated conversation with Sir William Markham's two sons. For a moment he rejoiced, but immediately afterwards his pride asserted itself, and he strode forward.

"Are these gentlemen friends of yours?" he demanded. "Because if so why are they ashamed to come up to the 'ouse?"

The young people looked very ill at ease. "It was our fault, Mr. Hilsdon," said Jim Markham. "We were fortunate enough to render your daughters assistance with their motor-car the other day."

"An' now you come meetin' em as though they was servant gals," said Mr. Hilsdon sternly. "I'll 'ave you know, gentlemen, that this sort o' thing 'as got to stop. I give you fair warnin' that I forbid you to speak to my daughters. Come, girls. Good-mornin', gentlemen." The last word was accentuated and brought a flush to the faces of the Markhams.

"Straight from the shoulder, wasn't it?" asked Jim. "He's rough of speech, but he looks a decent old boy."

"You're right, Jim," replied his brother. "It's a beastly shame the way everyone's barring the Hilsdons. The girls are awfully jolly, real high-steppers. There's no one to touch 'em in Ketterham."

"Can't we talk the people over?"

"No use, I'm afraid. At least, not at present. If the Hilsdons stick on they may wear the others out."

"It wouldn't be any good talking to the guv'nor, I suppose?" suggested Jim.

"He'd have a fit," replied Cyril.

As a matter of fact he was nearly having one at that moment. Mr. Hilsdon, after the aforesaid interview, strode on into the road. Here he came across Sir William Markham, who was gazing at some recently-erected cottages.

"They're nice little 'ouses," said Mr. Hilsdon in friendly tones.

Sir William swung round and glared at Mr. Hilsdon in haughty surprise.

"I was not aware, sir, that I addressed you," he said in freezing tones.

Then he stalked on, leaving Mr. Hilsdon boiling over with rage.

"By gum!" the pork-pie king muttered. "I'll make 'im pay for that. I'll make the whole crowd of 'em pay. 'Ere I am ready an' willin' to be friendly, ready to support their clubs, an' they treat me like a bit o' dirt. I'll make 'em suffer."

Two weeks passed by, and left the Hilsdons still in their isolated grandeur. Mr. Hilsdon had been very thoughtful during those two weeks, and one day at luncheon he amazed his family by suddenly springing to his feet and thumping on the table with his fist.

"I've got it!" he cried. "I'll smash 'em proper."

A journey to London was the immediate result of this statement. From the Metropolis Mr. Hilsdon wired that he would be staying in town several days. As a matter of fact his visit extended to three weeks.

When he returned he was more his old jovial self than he had been for some time. He brought back with him a keen faced-man named Armstrong, and for several days the two men were very busy with ordnance maps. Each day they went out and tramped all around Ketterham, Armstrong taking copious notes all the time.

"If you want to see some fun, girls," said Mr. Hilsdon one morning, "come down to the golf course in an hour's time."

Mr. Hilsdon and Mr. Armstrong presently left the house and passed through the village, coming out very near to Sir William Markham's house. In the road stood a party of golfers equipped for the fray, Sir William amongst them.

"I'll give 'em another chance," Mr. Hilsdon said to himself.

"Good-morning," he observed, in loud, breezy tones as he passed by the golfers.

Several people would have liked to answer, but they did not care to risk it. Sir William's gaze roved fiercely over his following, in case there was a possible traitor that required quelling. So no word of reply was vouchsafed to Mr. Hilsdon's greeting.

"That's cooked their blooming goose," he muttered.

Side by side with Armstrong, he strode rapidly along towards the golf course, which was laid out on a stretch of open land about a mile from Ketterham.

"There's the cart!" he said abruptly.

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"I give you fair warnin' that I forbid you to speak to my daughters."

"Set 'em to work, Armstrong. Don't lose any time."

Armstrong hurried forward, and presently a gang of men were engaged in unloading large skeleton advertisements of the goods supplied by Mr. Hilsdon's firm. They erected them temporarily all along the side of the course where they could be seen from the road.

"You'd better get to work on the permanent erection," remarked Mr. Hilsdon to Armstrong. "Commence at——"

"What the blazes!"

It was Sir William's voice, and it was followed by a gasping groan. Mr. Hilsdon turned his head and saw the golfing party dumb with horror, staring at the eyesores his men were erecting. After a brief glance he turned his back and continued his orders to his foreman.

It really seemed that if words did not come to Sir William's lips he would either have a fit or choke. Fortunately for him, after a few more gurgles, the words began to gush out. It was perhaps lucky, considering the ladies present, that his rage caused his first few sentences to be somewhat indistinct.

"What do you mean by it, you confounded interloper?" he shouted at length, gripping Mr. Hilsdon's arm. This was Mr. Hilsdon's moment. Brushing away Sir William's hand, he said:

"I was not aware, sir, that I was addressing you."

A gasp of wonder arose from the members of the golfing party. Could they have heard aright? Had Sir William Markham, the great Sir William, the star of the smart set, had he really been snubbed? It was appalling. The baronet himself staggered under the blow, and seemed as though he would fall. Two sympathisers ran to his side and supported him.

Mr. Hilsdon turned his back again and calmly continued his instructions.

"B-b-by the L-L-Lord Harry!" gasped Sir William. His eyes bulged out above his crimson cheeks and his grizzled moustache absolutely bristled.

"Still there?" remarked Mr. Hilsdon, turning round again. "You'll oblige me by takin' yourself off, Sir William. When I wants you or any of your friends on my land I'll ask you."

"Your land," several men shouted in unison.

"Yes, my land," repeated Mr. Hilsdon triumphantly. "This land belongs to me, and I'm goin' to fence it in with advertisements. Anyone goin' on it without my

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"*I will go and see Mr. Hilsdon,*" he said.

permission 'll be prosecuted. So put that in your pipes an' smoke it."

Sir William could not speak, but Mr. Godfrey Langton made the running.

"We have obtained permission to use this land from the Office of Woods," he said. "It is Crown land."

"And I've bought it off the Crown an' I'm goin' to put advertisement 'oardings all round it. You'll be able to pass your time readin' 'em now."

"I'll have the law on you. I'll fight the case in every court," bellowed Sir William, finding his voice again.

"You're welcome to try; you'll put plenty o' money into the lawyers' pockets. 'Ere's the title-deeds. See!" Mr. Hilsdon thrust the documents joyfully into Sir William's face. "Now clear off, all of you. I give you a week in which to send men to take your club 'ouse away. If it ain't gone in a week I'll 'ave it pulled down."

Dejected and defeated, the would-be golfers slunk off their one-time course, casting back longing glances.

"Serves us right," said Cyril Markham, who was not an enthusiast as regards the ancient and royal game. "Old Hilsdon was prepared to be friendly. He's the richest man in the county, he's got the best house in the county, and his two daughters are as nice and pretty a pair of girls as you'd see in a day's march."

"He's cornered us completely," Mr. Langton remarked. "We'll have to stick to tennis till we can lay out another course. Hullo, hullo, what's this?"

A boy came up with a letter in his hand. It was addressed "Godfrey Langton, Esq., Secretary to the Ketterham Lawn Tennis Club."

Langton broke the seal and a smothered exclamation left his lips.

"By Jove! Listen to this!" he cried, his face black with rage:

"SIR,—Under the lease on which you hold the lawn tennis ground in Kette-ham Lane, no mention is made with regard to notice of disuse. As I have now purchased the ground from its late owner, I hereby give you notice to quit and remove your belongings by sundown this day.

"The rent due to-day amounts to five guineas, and has not yet been paid. As I have purchased the goodwill and assets, I request you to forward me a cheque for five guineas by return.

"Yours faithfully,

"THOMAS HILSDON."

Cyril Markham laughed outright.

"The old boy's a game bird," he cried. "We've given him the cold shoulder and he's giving us the mailed fist."

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Godfrey Langton was furious. In company with some members of the club committee he hastened home and examined a copy of the lease. The latter was a very informal document drawn up on a sheet of foolscap, for no such contingency as the present one had ever been dreamt of.

"Absolutely cornered!" cried Jim Markham.

The men present gazed blankly at each other.

"What's to be done?" asked one.

"Go and beg Hilsdon's pardon and see if we can't get him to reconsider his decision," advised Cyril Markham.

"Blowed if I don't think you're right," said another man. "I'd have been willing to be friendly with him from the first, and so would my people; it has been your father's doing from the beginning."

"I know that," replied Cyril. "Let's go and see the guv'nor."

So a deputation waited on Sir William Markham and invited him to surrender.

"I'll see him in"—Lady Markham entered the room—"in Jericho first," thundered Sir William.

"Going there to prospect for a golf course, guv'nor?" inquired Jim pleasantly.

Sir William groaned. Life without golf would not be worth living, and there was now no course within twelve miles.

"We're going to talk to Mr. Hilsdon," announced Cyril defiantly.

Sir William opened his mouth, but Lady Markham's presence caused him to check his speech. He thought things over rapidly. Clearly his position was seriously threatened by a strong force. He had brought his aristocratic guns to bear on Mr. Hilsdon, but they had been silenced by weapons of much greater calibre. He gulped down his pride.

"I will go and see Mr. Hilsdon," he said.

A murmur of wonder arose, and no one said a word whilst the baronet left the room. They were still silent when Sir William's motor-car was heard moving away down the drive.

For at least a quarter of an hour Sir William cooled his heels in the morning room at Denham Hall. Mr. Hilsdon had sent out word that he was busy. His occupation, as a matter of fact, consisted of loud chuckling and muttered remarks, such as:

"Brought 'em to 'eel!" and "Got 'em on a bit o' string!"

Presently he entered the morning room. Sir William arose and bowed stiffly. But his blue blood was yet to receive the greatest shock of all.

"Mornin', Sir William, 'ow's the fried fish trade?" Mr. Hilsdon inquired pleasantly.

Sir William doubled up and collapsed into a chair. The secret he had cherished in shame was known, and known by Hilsdon of all persons.

His investments not yielding enough to keep his establishment on its proper basis, Sir William had put a large sum of money into a number of fried fish shops, and from them he derived at least a hundred per cent. on his capital.

"Fine payin' game, ain't it?" Mr. Hilsdon inquired, a genial smile on his face.

"For Heaven's sake, man, don't breathe a word," Sir William intreated piteously. "I'll do anything I can if you'll promise me that."

And so it came about that Sir William returned to the waiting deputation and staggered them with this remark:

"Mr. Hilsdon and his family are dining with me to-night. I have made a great mistake in him, but then all men, even our greatest men, make mistakes. In future I hope to number the Hilsdons amongst my closest friends."

The Ketterham golf course and lawn tennis grounds are now amongst the most perfectly equipped in the country. Mr. Hilsdon's money did much to put them in such a position. Everyone speaks highly of the Hilsdons, and it is rumoured that the two girls are likely to make excellent matches in the very near future.

Mr. Hilsdon and Sir William are as David and Jonathan, and it is quite on the cards that their prefixes will shortly be identical.

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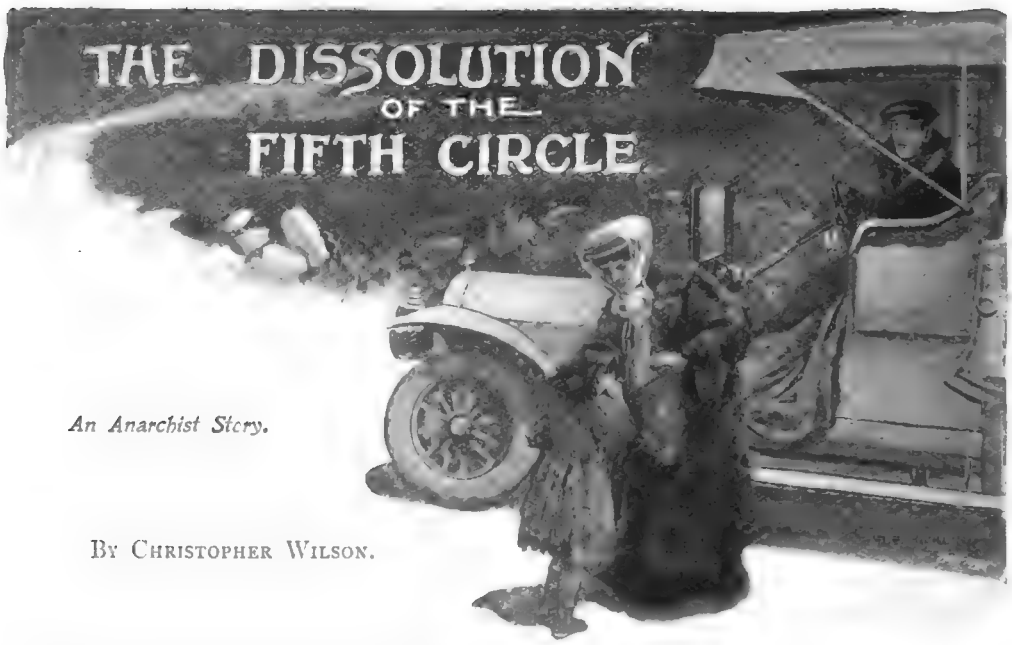

An Anarchist Story.

By Christopher Wilson.

The last sharp curve of the mountain pass was left behind, and the dusty road ran on in an unbroken streak of white till it dipped over the distant horizon.

Suddenly, the silence of the desolate plain was broken by the hoarse note of the motor horn. The keen eyes of the driver had picked out a tiny spot that seemed little more than a blur against the whiteness of the distant track. Again the note of warning sounded, and as the powerful car swiftly garnered in the flying furlongs, the outlines of the object became clearer. It was a child, and as the car glided onwards with diminished speed, its occupants saw with amazement that she was running straight towards them, heedless of her danger.

With an exclamation of annoyance, the driver wrenched impatiently at his brakes. For a few moments the whirling axle ground sullenly and with strident clamour against the tightening friction bands, and then the huge machine came throbbing to a standstill within a few paces of the child.

Barefoot and ragged, she was a curious contrast to the aristocratic and elegant lady motorist. And yet, as she ran on towards the motionless car, weeping bitterly and throwing out her little arms in the abandonment of grief, the heart of the mother beat with quick sympathy beneath the girl's priceless furs. Impulsively she sprang to the roadway, and sought with soothing words and tender caresses to comfort the trembling little one. Breathlessly, and in a voice broken with sobs the little girl tried to explain, but, at the sound of the lady's voice, she paused and gazed uncomprehendingly at the speaker. The lady noticed the child's embarrassment, and turned with a smile to her companion, who watched the scene from his seat in the car.

"Do come and speak to her. She cannot understand my Spanish, and I am afraid that her dialect is too much for me."

With an answering smile that lit up his grave, handsome features with sudden sunshine, the young man descended, and spoke gently to the frightened child.

At last, in spite of the tears that would intervene, she contrived to tell her story, encouraged by the kindly pressure of the hand that held her own in a firm clasp.

When she had finished, the young man turned to the lady, and said, speaking in English:

"Poor little mite! It's a sad story. Her father belongs to the city, her mother is dead, and she lives here with her grandmother. The old woman is ill, and the poor little one rushed out to look for help—here!"

He flung out his hand in eloquent gesture towards the barren and lifeless landscape.

For reply, the lady took the little waif in her arms, and carried her to the car.

The Mercédes awoke suddenly to palpitating life, and dashed forward, coming to a

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halt again in front of a wretched hovel that stood by the side of the road. The driver glanced at the lady.

"You had better wait here and keep the child with you."

She nodded gravely in acquiescence, and he entered the dwelling.

An old woman lay upon a mattress in the corner of the only room. She was conscious, and her dark eyes shone with a strange light, but her face had already taken on the waxen hue of death, and even to the unskilled eye it was plain that the end was at hand. With quivering lips she drained the measure of brandy that the visitor poured from his flask, and then she spoke, gasping painfully for breath:

"No, *señor* . . . no. You can do nothing for me. It was a stroke . . . it came like the lightning flash . . . and now, all is over . . . *Santa Maria!* . . . all is over! But 'Nita . . . poor little lamb . . . my poor little 'Nita . . ."

At the very instant of deadly aim, his eye fell upon the child, who sat upon the knee of the Queen. His arm dropped to his side.

The feeble voice choked, and the dark eyes wandered towards the open door in pitiful inquiry. He leant over her and said gently:

"Have no fear. 'Nita is here. She is with the . . . with my wife."

For an instant the old woman's eyes lit up with unspeakable gratitude mingled with intreaty, and her withered lips moved but no sound came from them. Then a shadow swept across her features, the light vanished from her eyes leaving them fixed and dull, and she began to mutter incoherently. The young man stooped to catch her words.

"A good boy, Pedrillo . . . and a good man . . . till poor Lola died. The brandy flask and the evil companions . . . and the broken heart . . .

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ah, *Madre di Dios!* . . . the broken heart! And yet, he loves his little 'Nita . . . his little 'Nita . . . he loves his . . ."

The murmured words grew fainter, and the thin fingers picked aimlessly at the tattered coverlet. Then, her limbs were convulsed, her breast heaved spasmodically as she fought desperately for one brief instant with her last enemy—and there was peace.

The young man crossed himself, as he gazed at the white face from which the hand of death was already smoothing away the hard lines of trouble and care. Then, kneeling upon the earthen floor, he prayed silently for the repose of the wearied soul.

When he came out into the glaring sunshine, his eyes were dim, and his voice faltered as he spoke in a low tone to the lady.

Her eyes filled with tears, and her arm drew the little one to her breast as she whispered:

"You must come with us, 'Nita. Your grandmother sleeps."

Then the car sped swiftly on its way.

* * * * *

In the outskirts of the city the pace was reduced, and in the crooked streets the car moved as slowly as an active man might walk. For the people had flocked together from all quarters to greet the travellers, and the driver had need of all his skill to find a way through the crowds that pressed forward to welcome the well-known car.

Brightly-coloured sashes and 'kerchiefs waved in the air, and on every side arose the enthusiastic cries:

"*Viva El Rey!*" "*Viva La Reina!*" "*Viva Ena!*" "*Viva Victoria!*"

But, at the corner of the Calle San Juan, Pedro Montez was waiting.

As the noise of the shouting grew louder, announcing the near approach of the Royal car, his right hand began to swing to and fro, as if the man were testing the weight and poise of the tiny sphere of shining metal that lay pressed against his palm.

Then the car swept round the corner, and as the bystanders around him broke forth in loud acclamations, waving their caps in the air, Pedro flung up his arm with a quick sweeping movement.

But at the very instant of deadly aim, his eye fell upon the child, who sat upon the knee of the Queen. His arm dropped to his side as if smitten by paralysis, and his swarthy face went white to the lips. Blindly he staggered backwards and leant against the wall for support, while the car with its freight of youth and love passed on its way.

At nightfall, he wandered aimlessly and distracted through the crowded thoroughfares, waiting with fierce impatience for the summons that he knew would come. The Queen had undertaken to provide for the helpless child, and the news sped through the city on a thousand gossiping tongues.

At last, a hand fell lightly upon his shoulder, and he swung round to look into the flashing eyes of Gomez.

"The Fifth Circle awaits its messenger. Come."

* * * * *

In an upper room the Fifth Circle had assembled. At the entrance of Pedro and Gomez the brethren rose. Then, at a sign from the Master, they resumed their seats again. Pedro cast a glance round the room, and noticed that his customary chair at the end of the long table had been removed. The Master beckoned to him, and he stepped forward to the vacant place. As he looked at the faces of his companions, he was vaguely conscious that their severity was tinged with sympathy.

Then the Master spoke:

"Pedro Montez, you have broken the law of the Fifth Circle, and you have proved false to your oath. You know the penalty?"

The accused man bowed silently, and the speaker went on:

"Nevertheless, the Circle is all powerful. It can punish, but it can also forgive. The impulse that stayed your hand is known to us, and you shall be forgiven—upon one condition. To-morrow, the tyrant rides forth alone to the woods. Your strength of to-morrow shall atone for your weakness of to-day. We await your answer."

There was silence, and those who sat at the table leant forward eagerly to watch the face of the man to whom life had suddenly come on the very verge of the grave.

Suddenly he drew himself erect and gazed straight into the eyes of the Master.

"You demand an answer. It is well. I give you my answer, thus—*Viva El Rey! Viva La Reina!*"

Hate blazed in their eyes, and knives flashed wickedly in the lamplight, but he faced them unmoved.

Again he cried: "*Viva El Rey!*" His arm swept forward with a sudden jerk, and something bright hurtled through the air.

There was a blinding flash as the missile struck the table,

The Fifth Circle was dissolved.

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The Fifth Circle was dissolved.

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Cap and Bells

THIS HOUSE TO LET.

What makes you long to rest your head,
But wonder where on earth's your bed,
And almost wish that you were dead?
Removing.

What is it makes life seem a bore,
When chairs and tables block the door,
And every day come bills galore?
Removing.

What makes you search for things in vain,
And miss that early morning train
It seems you'll never catch again?
Removing.

What is it makes you sit and wait
For meals which every day are late
And vow you *never* will be straight?
Removing.

What makes you work with main and might
In moving things about all night,
And try to hope they may come right?
Removing.
D. H.

* * * * *

UNAVOIDABLE.

Johnny returned from school with his exercise-book all blotted.

"Dear, dear, you naughty boy," exclaimed his mamma. "You've quite spoilt your new copy-book."

JOHNNY (equal to the occasion): "It isn't my fault, ma; I have a black boy sitting next to me in class, and he cut his finger, and it bled on my copy-book."

HIS METHOD.

A lawyer once asked a man who had at various times sat on several juries: "Who influenced you most, the lawyers, the witnesses, or the judge?"

He expected to get some useful and interesting information from so experienced a juryman. This was the man's reply:

"I'll tell yer, sir, 'ow I makes up my mind. I'm a plain man and a reasonin' man, and I ain't influenced by anything the lawyers say, nor by what the witnesses say; no, nor by what the judge says. I just looks at the man in the dock, and I says: 'If he ain't done nothing, why's he there?' and I brings 'em all in guilty."

* * * * *

A LITTLE GIRL'S PRAYER.

A little girl was just finishing her evening prayer, when she abruptly asked her mother to "Please leave the room."

Her mother wanted to know why; but the child made her understand that the rest of the prayer was of too personal and private a nature for even a mother to hear.

The mother accordingly withdrew; but the next night, when the same request was made, she insisted upon knowing just what it meant.

"Well," said the little girl, after much persuasion, "I just wanted to give fanks for bein' 'lowed to steal some sugar th' other day."

RIFLE PRACTICE.

Forty years ago there was a "Rifle Movement" as there is to-day, and some good stories were then told. Amongst them is one relating to Lord Wemyss, an old crack deer-stalker, who found to his mortification that, strive as hard as he would, he could not get into the first class.

Among his more successful competitors was a by no means distinguished-looking Lancaner, who gradually outstripped all his fellow-shooters, and ended by carrying off the first prize.

Lord Wemyss, curious to learn how he had gained his proficiency, asked him how he had acquired it.

"Oh," was the unpretending answer, "on cats in my garden at Brompton."

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A PEEP INTO THE FUTURE.

"No, Pamela," I said slowly, staring pensively at the fire, "it's no use. Of course, we've always been awful pals and all that sort of thing, and I'll always be your friend, and—and—a brother to you, don't you know, but I can't marry you. I'm not fond of you in that way, and I could never marry a girl I didn't love." Pamela had just proposed to me for the eighth time within a fortnight. She sighed.

"I don't want you to decide in a hurry, darling," she said tenderly. "Won't you take a little time to think it over? You don't hate me altogether, do you, Bill? And you might learn to love me as time went on."

I turned slightly away from Pamela. People say my profile is pure Stuart, and the movement allowed the firelight to play on my chestnut curls. After all, there was some excuse for Pamela. I always look rather handsome in navy serge.

"It's no good, Pamela, dear," I replied sadly. "You must try to forget me. Some day a good man—much better and nicer looking than I—will make you happy, and you'll laugh at all the love and pretty speeches you wasted on your poor, foolish, little Bill."

"You are cruel," she cried in a stern voice, "but what do you care how the poor moths you lure with your fascinating smile and your fatal attractions singe their silly wings? Why did you encourage me if you never—never meant anything?"

"My darling," she said, "how can you torture me so?"

"I don't understand you, Miss Hoskynnes," I replied haughtily. "I think you forget yourself!"

"At least tell me," she went on, "if there is anyone else."

I moved one foot into the firelight; I have rather jolly ankles.

"What right have you to ask me that question, Miss Hoskynnes?" I queried coldly.

"I suppose it's that Wentworth girl," she burst out bitterly. "Of course she has no brains, but then, ten thousand a year and a 90 horse-power aeroplane go farther than a lot of brains. I've been a guardian and an inspector of nuisances, and I'm bound to get in for Bloomsbury at the next election, not to mention Girton and my Natural History Tripos. But there—what's that compared with an aeroplane and ten thousand a year?"

She stood up and I couldn't help admiring her splendid physique. I remembered how she had faced hostile crowds at political meetings, and her cool, contemptuous courage on one occasion in the face of three hundred and seventy workless perambulator-makers who persistently shouted "Votes for Men" until they were ejected forcibly.

"How dare you speak thus of Miss Wentworth in your wicked jealousy?" I said reprovingly. "Oh, if I were a woman. Take care my big sister does not make you regret your hasty tongue.

"Oh, Pamela," I went on in a low tone and threatening recourse to my handkerchief. "I don't think you're very nice to me. It—it seems to me it's a very good thing I *did* refuse you. Fancy being married to a woman with a temper like yours. What would you be when I couldn't escape? I should be a martyr—a poor, downtrodden little husband. And it is *so* third-rate to lose your temper."

"Mr. Parker," said Pamela solemnly, "I must apologise for my remarks. I have behaved unpardonably. But when a woman sees all her future happiness crumble into dust, and only a cold grey existence stretch wearily onward towards the longed-for oblivion that ever recedes, she is apt to forget herself. I will say good-bye. To-morrow I sail for Somaliland to shoot big game.

"Good-bye—Bill," she went on, "you are the only man I shall ever love." She clasped my hands in hers. "May I—kiss you? Just this once?" she added in a low tone—"it will be the last time."

I bridled a little. "Of course, if you wish to leave me, and if you prefer lions and things to your friends, Miss Hoskynnes, I suppose you must follow the dictates of your choice," I remarked.

"Bill," said Pamela in a low, tense voice, "don't trifle with me. Tell me, Bill, am I to go away?"

"Of course, if you *want* to go," I murmured.

She clasped me in her arms. "My darling," she said, "how can you torture me so?"

"Pamela," I cooed from her shoulder, "don't you know a man's 'No' always means 'Yes'?"

F. E. B.

I remembered her cool, contemptuous courage in the face of three hundred and seventy workless perambulator makers.

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AN INCOMPARABLE COMPARISON.

"Nehemiah, compare the adjective cold," said a schoolmaster to his head boy.

"Positive cold, comparative cough, superlative coffin," triumphantly responded Nehemiah.

* * * * *

AS IT SHOULD BE.

JONES (who is carving): "By jove, if there is anything I do love it's roast goose."

MRS. JONES: "Well, John, there's nothing to my mind so beautiful and touching as a proper affection among members of a family."

A DISCOVERY.

HE (at the hotel table): "I've often wondered how these waiters can remember so many orders at once. I know now."

SHE (who had often wondered the same thing): "Oh, do you? How can they remember so much?"

HE (triumphantly): "They don't."

* * * * *

AS GOOD AS HE GAVE.

"Here is my seat, madam, but candour compels me to say that I think you are as well able to stand as I am."

"Politeness compels me to say 'Thank you, sir.'"

THE DIFFERENCE.

When I first saw Matilda she
Was absolute simplicity;
And with her clogs and shawl on,
And with no hat at all on—
I'm no concealment making—
The fact is—she was taking
In the clothes line.

Well, nowadays, Matilda, she
Is really quite a sight to see.
On milliners' erections,
And dressmakers' confections,
Goes all the cash I'm making—
And still Matilda's taking
In the clothes line!

Ethna Dane.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

A RECIPROCAL TARIFF.

MYKER: "Why did you give up smoking?"

PYKER: "In order to marry a rich widow."

HYKER: "I fail to see the connection."

PYKER: "She refused to give up her weeds unless I would give up mine."

* * * * *

A MISTAKE.

GOOD MAN (sadly): "Ah, my son, you have been to the circus; it pains me greatly that one so young should have crossed the threshold of iniquity."

BAD BOY: "But I didn't cross no threshold; I crawled in under the tent."

THE REASON WHY.

"That young couple seem to be getting on very well together. Are they married?"

"Yes, but not to each other."

* * * * *

LOOKING AHEAD.

"I am not wealthy," he said, "but if the devotion of a true and tender heart goes for anything with you, Miss Clara——"

"It goes very well with me, Mr. Spoonbill," interrupted the fair girl, with a pensive look in her face; "but how will it go with the grocer and the butcher?"

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WHY THEY WERE IN BLACK.

In consequence of the lateness of trains at a certain place, a meeting was held there recently to consider the situation. A gentleman who was to have attended the meeting at the opening of it failed to do so, owing to the train being late as usual.

As one of the stations before his destination was reached he was heard to exclaim:

"What a villainous station this is. They try to irritate one on purpose. Look at those girls in the refreshment room. Why do they dress them all in black?"

"Don't you know?" said a fellow-passenger in a most solemn tone of voice, and with a look of awe on his face.

"No," replied the curious and fretful traveller.

"Why," said the other, "because they are in mourning for the late train."

* * * * *

NATURALLY.

MRS. NEWLYWED: "My husband admires everything about me: my voice, my eyes, my form, my hands."

FRIEND: "And what do you admire about him?"

MRS. NEWLYWED: "His good taste."

* * * * *

EXPERT ADVICE.

Butler: "Pardon this interruption, but there is a deputation of unemp'oyed waiting for you at the door."

His Excellency: "Tell the people to go home quietly." (Drains a glass of champagne.) "People in this world can get on very well without work—at least, I find it so."

PREFERRED A FRESH ONE.

The other day a couple of very dear old ladies were taking a stroll down the High Street of their town when their attention was called to a big poster which an enterprising tradesman was pasting upon a board outside his establishment.

"'Join our Goose Club, Mary," one of them read. "Isn't it funny? What is a goose club?"

"Don't you know, Sarah?" inquired her companion in rather a condescending tone. "A goose club is the invention of an enterprising age, by which the poorest people are able to get themselves a goose for Christmas on the instalment plan."

"Good gracious, fancy that," retorted the other, completely mystified; "a leg this week, a wing next, and so on, I suppose till Christmas. I think I'd rather keep my sixpence till the time came, and buy a nice fresh one, wouldn't you?"

* * * * *

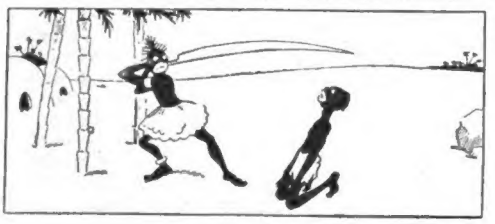
A MULTUM IN PARVO.

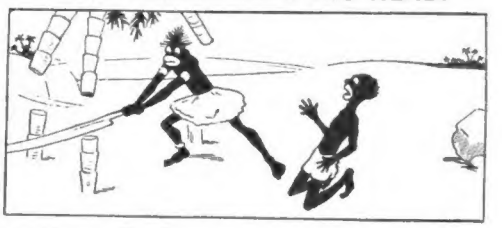
SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER: "And you have no brothers and sisters?"

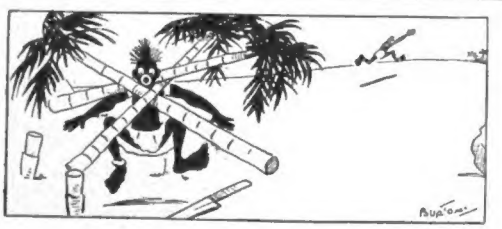
LITTLE EDNA: "No, ma'am. I'm all the children we've got."

* * * * *

AN EXECUTION IN WALLABALOO: HOW THE NIGGER KEPT HIS HEAD.







NO MORE BABY TALK.

SHE: "Who's is oo?"

HE: "Oors."

SHE: "For ever and ever and ever?"

HE: "Ess, I is."

SHE: "Has oo dot five pounds for oor baby, dear?"

HE: "Good gracious, no, Melinda. You think I'm made of money, don't you?"

* * * * *

HER DIFFICULTY.

MOTHER: "If you marry him in haste you will repent at leisure."

DAUGHTER: "Well, I can't bear to think of any other girl repenting at leisure with him"

TROUBLED.

A little girl came to her nurse one day from the garden in great trouble.

"Nurse," she exclaimed, "does it hurt worms to tie knots in them, because I want to make them into a chain, and I don't see how else to do it?"

* * * * *

IT KEPT THE CAT OFF.

MISTRESS: "Good gracious, Babette, what have you been doing with this chair?"

SERVANT MAID: "You see, ma'am, the cat kept going on it and tearing the plush, so I spread some mustard on the seat, and now she lets it a-be."

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GOT HIS RISE.

"Look here," said the capitalist to his secretary, "this wretched copper mine is costing me far too much money. If you can look about and make a saving somewhere, I'll raise your salary five pounds a month."

"But suppose such saving was less than five pounds a month?" asked the young man artlessly.

"Well, I've tried to calculate it out myself, and I cannot see where I can save a ha'penny. If you can, you are worth the extra five pounds."

The young man overhauled the accounts, but he failed to find a single expense that could be cut down. Finally, it occurred to him that he was drawing sixteen pounds a month for acting as secretary of the mining company.

"You can save fifty shillings a month, sir," he informed his employer next day. "I have taken that amount off the salary of your secretary."

The capitalist paid up like a Briton, and the secretary was two pounds ten a month richer.

Mr. Hardup: "Look here, you've made a mistake with my washing. You sent home four or five old handkerchiefs that don't belong to me, and nothing else."

Washerwoman: "They ain't handkerchiefs; that's your last shirt, sor."

* * * * *

HOW SHE DID IT.

DE HAVEN: "I tell you what, De Young, I have the sharpest wife you ever saw in your life. Why, the other day I gave her just enough money to go out and buy one dress, and if you'll believe it she came home with two."

DE YOUNG: "That is sharp. How did she manage it?"

DE HAVEN: "Why, she bought one and the other she had on when she went out."

* *

A WASTED COMPLIMENT.

"Yes, I told him that it was said that kisses were much sweeter in the dark——"

"And he turned down the gas?"

"The silly did nothing of the kind. He just sat there like a stick and said that if a girl were as handsome as I, he thought darkness would detract from the pleasantness of the occasion. It was a very nice compliment, but there is a time to speak and a time to act."

THEY WERE STARTLED.

A lecturer who protested against people going to sleep during his disquisitions on heathen lands would, if he perceived any tendency in that direction, introduce some queer or startling statement to revive their flagging attention.

On one occasion, when his audience seemed rather somnolent, he thundered out:

"Ah, you have no idea of the sufferings of Englishmen in Central America on account of the enormous mosquito. A great many of these pests would weigh a pound, and they will get on the logs and bark as the white men are passing."

By this time all ears and eyes were wide open, and he proceeded to finish his lecture.

The next day he was called upon to account for his extraordinary statements.

"But I didn't say one mosquito would weigh a pound," he protested. "I said a great many of them would. I think, perhaps, a million of them might do that."

"But you said they bark at the missionaries," persisted his interlocutor.

"No, no, my dear sir; I said they would get on the logs and on the bark. You misunderstood me."

* * * * *

A CLEVER OMISSION.

"Did you write to papa, George?"

"Asking for your hand?"

"Of course."

"Yes, I wrote."

"That's strange. I supposed papa would be terribly angry. You know he doesn't like you."

"Yes, I know. But I fixed it all right. I—I didn't sign the letter."

* *

A LACK OF EXACTITUDE

The professo who thought hi system was run ning down asked his old enemy, the doctor, to prescri e for him.

"All the medicine you need," said the doctor, after listening to a recital of the symptoms, "is a tonic in the shape of fresh air."

"Well," responded the professor, slightly irritated, "what exactly is the shape of fresh air?"

GUSHING.

Young Woman (to elderly Duchess): "So good of you to patronise our Charity Bazaar, dear Duchess; and I need hardly add how we would deem it a favour if the Duke would come also, if only to fetch you away."

[*CAP AND BELLS continued overleaf.*]

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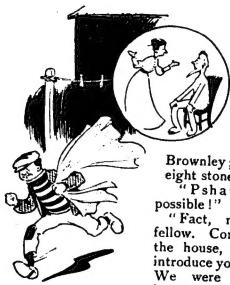


Mrs. Miggs: "You told me, sir, that all I had to do was to leave the tablecloth outside during the night and the fruit-stains would disappear. Well, I did so last night."

"Ah, then the stains—"

"No, it was the tablecloth that disappeared."

HOW HE DID IT.

"Did you pick up any weight by going to the sea-side last year, Smithlay?"

"I did, indeed, Brownley; gained eight stone."

"Pshaw — impossible!"

"Fact, my dear fellow. Come up to the house, and I'll introduce you to her. We were married last month."

* *

HE WAS THE MAN.

"Only those who have been roused from midnight slumber on shipboard by the terrible cry 'Man overboard,'" said a traveller, "can comprehend to the full its terrible meaning, the fear and horror in its sudden alarm."

"Oh, yes, they can," replied a little lame shoemaker, who was not much of a traveller. "I heard it once when I wasn't near the ship, and I realised the horror of it more than anyone else.

"You couldn't," said the traveller scornfully.

"Yes, I could," persisted the little lame shoemaker; "I was the man who was overboard."

*

TOO MUCH OF A STRAIN.

CRAWFORD: "Do you ever try flattery on your wife?"

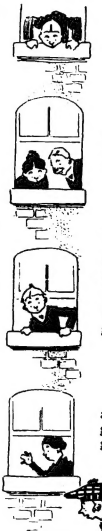
CRABSHAW: "Yes, and it always works, except when she wants a new gown, and I tell her she looks charming in her old one."

* *

HIS METHOD.

"How did you contrive to cultivate such a beautiful black eye?" asked Brown.

"Oh!" replied Fogg, who had been practising upon roller skates, "I raised it from a slip."



A GENEROUS SOUL.

"Jane," said Mr. Skinnphlint, a softened light shining in his eyes, "I think I have never given you anything for a birthday present, have I?"

"No, William," answered Mrs. Skinnphlint. "You never have."

"This birthday, Jane," said Mr. Skinnphlint, in a voice trembling from unwonted feeling, "shall be a different one from any we have ever had. What would you say to a present of some useful article for the house?"

"I would like it very much, William."

"Something, for instance, that would be both useful and ornamental? Something that you could select yourself? How would that do?"

"It would please me above all things."

"Then, Jane," said Mr. Skinnphlint, with an effort to retain his composure, "we need a new hat brush. Here is a shilling to buy it with. If it costs less, Jane," he added in a broken voice, "you can keep the change."

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CAUSE AND EFFECT.

In one of our public schools is a girl whose forbears held that the principal aim of the life of a woman is marriage. This little girl is well up in most studies except geography. The other day her teacher sent to her mother to see that the girl studied her lesson. The next day showed no improvement, and her teacher asked her whether she gave the note.

'Yes, ma'am," was the reply.

"And did your mother read it?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"What did she say?"

"She said that she didn't know geography an' she got married, an' my aunt didn't know geography an' she got married, an' you know geography and you haven't got married."

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COLLECTING THE FINE.

A Texas judge has before him a culprit.

"What are you here for?"

"Picking pockets, yer honour."

"Picking pockets? You're an honest man to admit it. I'll let you off with twenty dollars fine."

The thief goes through his clothes and can find only sixteen dollars.

"Here," exclaimed the judge, "who arrested this man?"

"I did," says Officer Mulcahey, standing up.

"Well, take him out in the crowd till he gets the other four dollars."

* * *

VERY HARD.

CHILD: "Oh, father—"

FATHER: "What is it?"

CHILD: "It must be pretty hard on a centipede when his feet go to sleep."

DAEIN' FINE.

A slater who was engaged upon the roof of a house in Glasgow fell from the ladder and lay in an unconscious state upon the pavement. One of the pedestrians in the street who rushed to the aid of the poor man chanced to have a flask of spirits in his pocket, and, to revive him, began to pour a little down his throat.

"Canny, man, canny," said a man looking on, "or you'll choke him."

The "unconscious" slater opened his eyes and said quietly: "Pour awa', man, pour awa'; ye're daein' fine."

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

A Little Desultory Talk to Wind-up the Number.

POETRY AND PROSE.

I HAVE often said that a man may be able to write excellent prose and be no earthly use at verse. Queerly enough, two *vice versâ* instances have lately come to my notice. A lady who seems to have the most extraordinarily fertile gift for throwing off gracefully-turned, witty, delicately-phrased verses has sent me stories time and again, and every time I have had to refuse them—not because they are bad exactly—but because they lack all that should go to the making of a successful story. They have no power, no grip, no interest, no humour—none of the qualities, in fact, that a story should have.

The other poet and would-be fiction writer is a more extraordinary case. His verses are sometimes quite beautifully written. But directly he starts writing prose he *writes* badly. His sentences become involved, obscure, ungrammatical; he takes a paragraph in which to say what he could easily put into a line—and lucid compression is one of the chief virtues of his poems!

How explain these queer cases? On the face of it one would imagine that a man who writes good verse—by far the most difficult of literary accomplishments—ought to be able to write good prose. Mind you, this very often is the case, but by no means always. One can only pity the poor poet who lacks the simpler and much more lucrative gift.

LADY EDITORS.

"HAVE you any ladies on your editorial staff?" So writes a lady correspondent whose story had been returned, and she goes on to state that, if so, her contribution has been rejected because the lady sub-editor was jealous of its beauty and merit. A most unworthy suggestion! In the first place, I have not the pleasure of working with a lady-assistant. And, even if I had, my correspondent would be very foolish to accuse her of jealousy merely on account of her sex. I rejected the story myself for no more subtle reason than its lack of merit.

There are many lady editors in the world, and, honestly, I think them in every way as capable as their bearded colleagues. And not only as capable, but as fair and large-minded. If I possessed a lady's paper I should certainly put its control into the hands of a lady, my only fear being that, so far from treating her own sex unfairly, as my correspondent suggests, she would be unduly lenient to lady contributors. Surely, in these latter days, when women band together to fight their way in the world, the notion that they are hardest on their own sisters should have long, long ago exploded!

A WORD OF ADVICE.

WHY are young authors so fond of choosing subjects for the exercise of their art about which they are profoundly ignorant? The life which surrounds them, the class of society they know, the country they live in—these are apparently not good enough for them. They move, say, in commercial, middle-class circles, and must needs write stories about the aristocracy, making generally a hopeless muddle of titles and codes of etiquette. They live in Suffolk, and promptly place their hero and heroine in the centre of China, about which they have as much knowledge as about the geography of the planet Neptune!

If only all writers would recognise the fact that, properly treated, no class or country is better adapted to literary purposes than another! Surrey can be made quite as interesting and romantic as Afghanistan, a grocer as a belted earl. But neither Afghanistan nor Surrey, belted earl nor grocer, can be interesting, romantic, or anything else, unless the writer has intimate knowledge of his subject.

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